Boston Public Library
3 9999 10522 765 4

PER RM.

№ AP2.R7H2

V.5

GIVEN BY

Anonymous

ROMANCE.

Vol. V. FEBRUARY, 1892. No. 1.

CONTENTS.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNERS . *Arthur Beardsley Mitchell*
A story of romantic love in a realistic setting.

AN OAK IN A STORM . . . . *Abraham Dreyfus*
Which, like all other oaks, withstood the tempest well.

THE WINNING NUMBER . *William McKendree Bangs*
A case of winning much but losing everything.

THE WISDOM OF A CHILD . . . . *Georges Price*
Which proved to be sufficient to gain a great object.

THE TRAVELLER'S TALE . . . . *Nina Fitch*
Which was much better than the traveller himself.

MY ASTRAL BODY . . . . . *St. James' Budget*
It was not very substantial, but it got the upper hand.

THE MEZZO-MATTI . . . . *Putnam's Magazine*
Who contrived to get some fun out of a cross man.

THE BUNDLE OF LETTERS . . . . *Moritz Jokai*
A lesson for all jealous husbands.

THE BLACK LACE BONNET . . . . . *Cornhill*
Small and frail, but an engine of great power.

A TALE OF A DISMAL SWAMP . *Will Allen Dromgoole*
Here is a ghost, but, as the French say, it will not bite.

PABLO DOMENICK . . . . . *Carmen Sylva*
Showing how much a man will give up for a prejudice.

THE MONKS OF OLD ST. NICHOLAS . *Alexander Dumas*
Who were not so monkish as they seemed.

THE MISER OF MARSEILLES . . . . *Anonymous*
Who makes one wish there were more such misers.

THE RED RAVEN . . . . . *Anonymous*
Which proved a merciless Nemesis.

THE MAN WHO WAS USED UP . . *Edgar Allan Poe*
But who managed to reconstruct himself.

YAP2
.R742
v.5

14 vols
Vol. 5

Anonymous
July 14, 1938

It is not always safe to reason from analogy. The young French girl in the following realistic and striking story would have done well to remember this. It was written for ROMANCE by Arthur Beardsley Mitchell.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNERS.

THERE was not a cloud in the sky. The whole long, undulating range of the green hills stood out vividly in the light. This made the smoke rising from the top of Sherbury more than usually conspicuous. Sherbury was only a knoll compared with the loftiest of its neighbors: but it was peculiarly placed, and could be seen as far up and down the valley as old Killington itself. Since Josef Varvin had taken to burning charcoal up there, people called Sherbury "the Volcano." The old Frenchman had built half a dozen great kilns on the top of it, and its vast forests were falling in order to feed them. It was said that he was growing rich. He employed now about a hundred hands in felling trees and tending the kilns. There was therefore quite a little settlement on the summit of Sherbury, and the roads up and down its sides were almost impassable from the wear and tear of the heavy teams. Most of the families who lived in this new "Smoke City," as it was called, were Canadian French, like Josef Varvin himself. There was no church, but once a month the Catholic priest came up there to preach in the school-house. It was not considered by the inhabitants of the surrounding country that a very high state of civilization prevailed in that part of Sherbury township which was known as "Smoke City."

It had to be admitted by everybody, however, that there was a garden in Smoke City which could not be excelled in the whole State of Vermont. It belonged to Pierre Beaubien, who had learned the florist's business in Montreal, and it had been wrought by him out of the primeval forest in the space of only five years. I have said, "by him:" but Marie, his wife, and Pier-

rette, his daughter, had done as much in the matter, perhaps, as had he himself. To be sure, they had a houseful of boarders during the busy time, and always two or three, so that their domestic cares were not inconsiderable; but then Pierre had his work at the kiln to do also, and sometimes there were whole days when he could not touch his garden from morning to night.

On account of this garden, in which the Beaubiens took a justifiable pride, it was felt among their neighbors that they held themselves as quite the aristocracy of Smoke City. Old Adolph Roney, for instance, could read and write both French—Parisian French—and English, and had a shelf of books hanging in his best room, —which was also his dining-room and kitchen, except during the warmest weather. Pierre Beaubien and his wife could not read a line in either tongue, and his eighteen-year-old daughter, Pierrette, had never been to school until the family had come to Smoke City, five years before.

"These Beaubiens are clean people, and they know how to make a garden," old Adolph would growl, as he sat smoking his pipe beside his kitchen door, and looking over toward the spring beauty bursting forth from every nook and corner of his neighbor's far from extensive inclosure opposite, "but why should his Pierrette snub my Jeanne and my Marceline? Are Beaubiens any better than Roneys? Am I not descended from that famous count who was one of the generals of Louis XI.? Have I not read it all in the book on my shelf yonder? And who are *they?* They can scarcely tell the names of their own grandfathers! Bah!"

And yet old Adolph was nettled by the hauteur of his neighbors, though there was an inexpressive something about them which exacted deference from everybody. Even Josef Varvin, while he would not have owned it for the world, felt it; but he was far enough above his laborers to feel rather proud of the Beaubiens and their airs, for which he reasoned they had not insufficient grounds. He liked to see the tall, straight mother and daughter—the daughter taller by a head—

moving about among their bright blossoms, or training the peas and hops which filled the ample vegetable patch behind the flowers.

"At any rate, they don't gossip," Josef Varvin said to his wife with a grin.

No, they did not gossip. They were too "high and mighty" for that. Still, even the Beaubiens were interested when one day—that bright day when there were no clouds, and everything seemed to be at peace—Larle Pichaud had a strange visitor. Larle Pichaud was on the very top of a kiln, when the stage came along which passed through Smoke City twice a day. Suddenly the vehicle stopped in front of the kiln, and a woman sprang down from it, shouting angrily the name of the handsome young charcoal-burner and daring him to come and meet her. A crowd of the villagers gathered in less than ten minutes, listening speechlessly while the woman, pale with rage, stood pouring out a torrent of abuse, in mingled French and English, upon his head.

As has been said, even Marie and Pierrette Beaubien had come among the others and with open mouths had watched Larle Pichaud, who seemed too bewildered to know just what to do, while he scrambled down from the kiln and stood before the woman, begging her to keep still and to go to his house. His young wife, who was scarcely older than Pierrette herself, and had been her schoolmate, sat, white and scared, on a stump near by, holding her three-months' baby. She was a daughter of one of the charcoal-burners, and her father and brothers also were gazing on the scene with fierce menacing brows. Then everybody had heard Larle say, "I thought you were dead, Aline," upon which the woman had given him the lie and had sprung on him like a wild beast. The men standing by tore her away from him, but it took four of them to hold her and get her to the cell back of Josef Varvin's barn, where offenders against the law were usually locked up. Pierrette Beaubien shrieked, as did all the other women, when they saw Larle Pichaud's face bleeding, and traced the

marks of the woman's nails in his cheeks and forehead. There had never been such a day as that in Smoke City. Larle, as well as the woman, was finally arrested, but before many weeks he came home to his distracted young wife. The case had been settled somehow. All that the people could make out was that he had made love to the hot-blooded young creature—who was, still, older than himself—but had grown to hate her because of her violent temper, and had broken off the match two years or more before. Then he had got married at once to somebody else. It was easy enough; all the women were wild after him. Another story was that the wronged woman was always sweet and gentle until her lover had deserted her, when she had been rendered insane by his heartlessness, and after brooding over her sorrow till she could bear it no longer, she had sought him out, and attacked him before the very eyes of the innocent girl who had married him.

Pierrette had her own theories of the matter, and from that day she hated the sight of the handsome charcoal-burner—by far the handsomest man in Smoke City—though previously she had greatly admired him, always secretly, and never with any glow of love. Pierrette had never been in love in her life, unless with her ravishing beds of roses and chrysanthemums.

One day she met pretty Fernande Pichaud alone upon the road, and said scornfully to her, "How could you keep on loving Larle Pichaud, and let him come back and live with you? Do you not believe that he used to love that poor girl who flew at him?"

The young wife replied only by a frightened sob. Pierrette had spoken very harshly.

"I would die before I would love him again, after that—for all his fine black eyes," Pierrette had scoffed on; "I would rather die than that he should ever kiss me again."

Fernande had only cried the faster, and hugged closer the babe in her arms while she hurried away. Pierrette Beaubien looked after her, her strong, proud face, brown and firm-set usually, now flushed and working

with passion. It was clearer in her mind than ever—as it might have been, and probably was, in the minds of her neighbors—that there was something radically different in the blood of the Beaubiens from this girl's and the others'.

"Yes, I would die," repeated Pierrette to herself, as she watched Fernande scudding off with her child; "I would be torn limb from limb before I would let him come back to me. I would take my baby in my arms and work in the kilns as my father does, before I would touch a cent of Larle Pichaud's money again. I would not care how black my face and hands got! Ugh!"

That summer the garden was a perfect dream of beauty. It had never been so fine. It was perhaps three acres in extent, and was fenced about rudely but closely with brush, over which Pierre Beaubien had trained morning-glories and convolvulus and clematis and honeysuckle, until it was as fair as the very dawn. It seemed as though he had but to tell a vine to grow in a certain way, in order to make it take the direction he desired. There was scarcely an uncovered space on the whole brush-fence. It was either freshly green or gay with bloom everywhere.

August came, and the Beaubien garden was a tangle of golden glory. Most people do not work much in their gardens in August, but every morning, almost as faithfully as in May and June, the Beaubiens were astir by daybreak, weeding, watering, seed-gathering, training. The other dwellers in Smoke City might call them "cold" and "stuck up," but there was a passion in them for this little plot of ground and its products which proved that their "coldness" was not a thing of universal application. And any one who ever thought of such subjects must have admitted that their presence in Smoke City was a distinct source of refinement and elevation to the place—with its unpainted cabins, its smutty-faced men, its swearing teamsters, its unfenced door-yards, still full of stumps from the recent clearing of its forests, and its swarms of neglected, jabbering children. There would have been almost nothing to

redeem its sordidness and ugliness, but for that rare, sweet garden of the proud, unneighborly Beaubiens.

There was a great rush of business as the fall came on. The kilns had never time to cool off. The charcoal had to be taken out almost before it was well burned through. Josef Varvin was even compelled to use again the large old kiln with which he had first begun the business all by himself, and which he had not used now for several years. It had not been very strong to begin with, and at last it had been patched up with skins and timbers. Into the deep earth-hole beneath it a rude causeway led, roofed over partly with earth and partly with boards. It was closed at the entrance with a clumsy but tight-fitting door. One of the hands, who had gone in there to warm himself on a cold day, had pulled to this door and had fallen asleep. He had been suffocated by the fumes of the charcoal. Josef Varvin had found him insensible, and had with his own hands carried him into the open air and tried to resuscitate him, but without success. The old man had never got over the shock. He was kind-hearted, and it had quite unnerved him. The kiln had not been used since then. But now sentiment and superstition were alike laid aside. Josef Varvin must use any means in his power to fill his orders. The old kiln was patched up afresh, and once more the slow smoke came curling out from the round hole in the top.

An influx of new workmen came too. Within the space of a fortnight a dozen were added to the force. The September haze was never so thick. The tourists who climbed Killington and Pico declared that Sherbury Mountain must be on fire, because it was covered with such a cloud of smoke. But all this was only the sign of Josef Varvin's prosperity. The long loft above the three rooms in which the Beaubiens lived had had two pallets laid beside the two beds there in which their regular boarders slept, for two new men who could get no other resting-place in the crowded little city.

One day Adolph Roney came hurrying into the Beaubien garden, where his neighbors were hard at work.

"A new man has come, Pierre," he said deferentially. "He is a nephew of mine—André Reboul. But I cannot take him, for my house is full. We would like to have him near us, and we all know how well Madame Beaubien would feed him. Cannot you make room for him?"

It was finally decided that another pallet could be laid upon the already well-filled floor of the Beaubien loft, and one was hastily constructed. The Beaubiens were thrifty. They meant to gather in all the pennies that they found in their way. That night André Reboul slept on the new husk pallet, and the next morning he ate an abundant portion of the savory croquettes which Pierrette fried for breakfast.

He was a tall, strong, good-looking fellow—this newcomer. Pierrette was half a head taller than her father, but André Reboul was a head taller than she. He carried himself well. He was not handsome with the picturesque beauty of Larle Pichaud, but he had a firm, well-curved cheek, a flowing black mustache, a masterful dark eye, and a well-set head. His voice was a trifle harsh and thick, and he spoke no English. He watched Pierrette sharply while she served the breakfast. It was a new thing for her to be much noticed by men. Her face was irregular, and her nose had a contemptuous turn to it which was not likely to please a stranger, while her tongue was well supplied with stinging words, which she bestowed freely upon those who did not please her. She liked the appearance of old Adolph's nephew, however, and did not resent his observation. She was even pleased when she fancied that his tone softened in addressing her. Seeing him, it suddenly occurred to her, was like finding a plant in bloom which she had never seen before. There was an interest in it.

When the dishes were washed, the kitchen swept, and the soup set boiling for dinner, Pierrette went out to her garden, but she did not seem to get along very fast. Instead of cutting away dead stalks and collecting the seeds in little papers, as she had been set to do, she found

herself leaning against the trellises and holding her shears absently in her hands, while she looked toward the woods in which the old kiln lay. André Reboul was at work there. She imagined him coming along the road to his dinner. Then she was seized with a sudden spasm of fear lest the soup should burn, and she hurried into the house to look after it. When she came out her mother said, "Why did you go in, child?"

"I wanted to see if the soup was burning."

"How could it?" asked her mother almost angrily. Had not the soup boiled calmly away on the stove every morning, now these many years? Was the girl going crazy?

It seemed a long time to Pierrette before the sun had reached the middle of his course. The table had been laid. (There was no cloth on the Beaubien table except on feast-days.) Everything was shining neat. The soup was done to a turn—thick with peas and lentils and garlic. The tall young figure of Andre Reboul came out from between the trees and into the road, just as Pierrette had pictured it. There were six other men in the family, all of them young and not ill-looking. Only two of them were married. They were to bring their families down to Smoke City soon, if Josef Varvir should decide that he would want them during the winter. Pierrette had seen the others come to their dinners now for many a day—yet she had not watched for any one of them to appear in sight upon the road. As she turned back to place the mustard on the table and get the tea, a sudden thought came over her. Did that foolish wife of Larle Pichaud like to see him coming along the road as she, Pierrette Beaubien, liked now to see this stranger? Perhaps she had liked to see him as much when she had known him only as long. Perhaps she had kept liking it better and better day by day through all those months. If she had—a sudden understanding of the case came over the mind of the simple, haughty French girl.

When the twilight drew on, Pierrette strayed, as usual, out into the garden. Some of the men followed,

and strolled up and down the borders, smoking their pipes and talking together. There were great bowers of nasturtiums in bloom. The beds of marigolds sent up a pungent odor. Long lines of brilliant, speared gladiolus seemed to be marching with banners across the garden. Bushes of blood-red salvia were just beginning to open.

"You did not cut away this bed of withered stalks, as I bade you this morning," grumbled Pierre Beaubien to his daughter as she came dreamily along the path.

"I worked all the morning," she protested.

"Oh, but so slow! *Mon Dieu!* I watched you. You dropped your shears a dozen times. You are getting too vain. Why is your hair braided so finely this evening?"

Pierrette's brown face flushed like the salvias. She tossed her head, and drew herself up until she towered far above her shrunken little father.

"You want me like the Roneys and the Bellons, then?" she said scornfully. "You would like my hair hanging off in little locks all over. That would be very tidy, I think! People might at least keep themselves as well as their gardens."

She tossed her head and walked away. She was in no mood to be scolded. She had hoped that André Reboul would come out into the garden after supper, like the other men, but, instead, he had gone over to see his cousins. It piqued her very much. The next few days she scarcely spoke to him, and she kept her fine gray eyes fixed on the ground whenever he drew near.

A week passed by, and André Reboul had not yet walked in the garden with the other men in the twilight. Some evenings he had had to go down and watch the old kiln. Generally he spent the time with the Roneys. Pierrette could hear their gay voices as they talked, though seldom his. He was either very shy or very morose. At any rate, he said little, and he spoke almost always in that harsh, forbidding tone. But Pierrette still fancied that when he spoke to her his voice

sounded different. She would not care for that, however, she told herelf. He did not seem to seek her society, and she was determined that she would be as distant as he was.

On the evening of the tenth day after André Reboul came to live in the Beaubien household he did not go down to the old kiln, nor over to the next house. Two or three of the boarders sat down on the rough door-step and smoked their pipes; the others strolled about aimlessly, as usual. Pierre and Marie were picking late beans, hurrying to get in all that they could before dark. Pierrette was clattering the dishes in the kitchen. One of the young men came in and asked her for a drink of water from the pump in the sink. She gave it to him, good-humoredly enough, and then he lingered a moment, chaffing her.

The sound of his bantering voice and a brief word or two from her came plainly out at the door. Suddenly Pierrette said, loudly and crossly, "I would thank you to go about your business!" and the young fellow came slinking, with a flushed face, out along the pathway. Shortly afterward Pierrette came out also. Her movements were slow and sulky, but she held herself up as proudly as ever. She made her way to the aster bed and stood there, gazing down at the beautiful flowers, which the two or three light frosts of September had not injured. To-night it was as warm as early August. The flowers seemed to revel in the heat as though they knew it was soon to fail them.

Pierrette had not noticed that André Reboul was leaning against the house when she came out. She had been too angry with Nicholas Coigny, who had just tried to kiss her, to pay much attention to her surroundings, and she supposed that André had gone over to see his cousins.

Presently she was aware that there was some one beside her, and she started a little when the voice of André Reboul said softly, in his thick, broad French: "You like these flowers the best?"

"No—no," stammered Pierrette, warm waves of color

chasing each other over her strong French face; "I like them all—some at one time, some at another."

"You have been troubled," he went on, looking squarely into her eyes.

"I—I did not say so."

"Oh, no!" The tall stranger spoke a little bitterly. "You tell me nothing. You speak to me as though—as though I were a lump of charcoal. *Mon Dieu!* I might be a dog!"

"I?" The girl lifted her thick black eyebrows, incredulously. "I—I did not dare to speak to you. I—I thought that it was you that treated me as though I were a dog."

Then they laughed into each other's eyes.

"I have wanted to come out into the garden every evening," he said, "but I was afraid that you would snub me."

"Oh, you must have known better!" she smiled back to him, reprovingly. "I would have liked to have you come."

"*Mon Dieu!* Why did you not say so?"

"I am not running after people to come and walk in my garden!"

They both laughed again. It seemed as though a chain had been subtly clasped, joining them together in the twinkling of an eye.

Silently they walked along to the other end of the garden. The dew was as heavy as in midsummer, and the vines shed drops upon them as they passed. Pierrette was almost trembling with a new excitement. She thought, in her dim, unreasoning way, that it was a kind of reaction from her wrath at Nicholas Coigny. They stood still at last behind the trellis covered with nasturtiums. No one could see them. Pierre and Marie had just gone in, treading heavily with their baskets of beans.

"That little idiot of a fellow troubled you just now in the kitchen?" began André Reboul, recurring to his former topic.

"He tried to kiss me!"

Pierrette threw back her shoulders and tossed her head.

"He was not so much to blame! But all the same I came near rushing at him and pitching him over the roof." The stalwart young fellow made a significant motion upward with his outstretched arms.

"I would have liked to see you! Why did you not do it?"

"I thought you would probably raise yourself up as you did just now and say, 'André Reboul, leave me to manage my own affairs!'"

"No—I should have thanked you."

"*Sacre!* How is one to tell what a girl will like! You have said such short words to me!"

"Nicholas Coigny knows well that most of the girls in Smoke City like that sort of thing. Oh, I have seen them! But I am not of that kind. No man has ever kissed me—and I have made every man's ears burn who has tried it. But," she added under her breath, "*I* am not pretty like Estelle Bellon and Fernande Pichaud."

"You are the prettiest girl I ever saw," he said, slowly.

"Oh!" she laughed, coquettishly, "I have heard that men talk in that way just to flatter. I know how I look. I am brown. I do not wear a veil like Estelle, and——"

"Stop! stop! I will not let you!"

"Yes," she persisted, playfully, "my nose is too big and my eyes are too big. Oh, I am the homeliest girl in Smoke City!"

"I would rather look at you and hear you talk than all the girls I have ever seen in my life!"

"Oh!" she went on, still laughingly, "it is likely that you talk so to girls very often. I have heard that men do."

The young Frenchman's dark, well-shaped face flushed.

"Before God," he said, in a low, passionate voice which frightened her, "I never said so to any woman before. I thought it when I saw you that first night, but I did not imagine I should ever dare to tell you so. I dreamed of you all night long."

"And yet you did not come into the garden," she murmured, reproachfully.

"I did not dare to, I tell you. You seemed so cold toward me, I thought you despised me. They told me that you did despise everybody."

"I do," cried Pierrette with a proud little laugh, "everybody but you!"

"I think you must despise me when I come in all black from the kiln. You are very neat. I never saw a girl so neat."

Pierrette blushed with pleasure. She was neat, and she knew it.

"I would not despise my good father," she retorted. "He has to get all black like the rest. I think I like you best with the charcoal all over your face and hands. Somehow you look bigger and stronger then!"

They walked slowly toward the house in response to a sharp summons from Marie. The damp chills of the September night were beginning to make themselves felt through the heat. Killington and Pico stood out from among the shadows opposite, side by side, straight, steep, towering up, as though with their needle-like points they would pierce the very mysteries of the heavens. The man went directly to his pallet in the loft above, whither all of his companions had repaired before him, while Pierrette assisted her mother in some final household labor. Her father was already asleep in his little bedroom opening off from one end of the kitchen, and Pierrette entered presently her own tiny closet at the other end; but when they were all quiet she stole out under the stars to look at the mountains again. She had always loved to see them, but now she felt a deeper interest in them than ever.

"They must love each other—like people," she mused, in her childish way. "How many, many years they must have stood side by side!"

As she gazed, the same inexplicable feeling filled her which she experienced when she looked at her garden in its splendor, in the first exulting flush of some fortunate morning.

"It must be beautiful to stand so—always beside the one you love—as they do," she murmured. Then sleepiness overcame her unwonted sentimentalism and she crept off to her poor little bedroom, but she tossed uneasily, instead of falling into the sound, dreamless slumber which she usually enjoyed.

The chief events of her meagre little life seemed to pass in review before her. The principal one was the affair of Larle Pichaud. She had never until lately been able to consider the conduct of his silly little wife without a curl of the lip. Now that conduct seemed no longer contemptible. It might be possible to cling to a man through everything—and very sweet. Things had never looked to her as they looked to-night.

The next two weeks were like a dream to Pierrette. The cold weather hung off. It was nearly the first of October, yet still the hard frosts delayed and the warm, bewitching evenings continued. There had been no farther misunderstanding between Pierrette and André Reboul. The two shy, proud souls, unlearned as they were in the world's wisdom, had studied and comprehended each other once for all. Kisses had passed between them now, and they had told each other of their love, but no word had been uttered regarding marriage. It was all too sacred and too new for that.

"I am not like these girls around here," Pierrette Beaubien said to herself. "Now there was Fernande. She had not known Larle Pichaud a month before they were married. They know nothing of such heavenly joy as mine—any more than they make or understand a garden like ours. And André is different. *Mon Dieu!* How glad I am that we are different from these rude creatures! He has never kissed any one but me, I have never kissed any one but him—yet I am eighteen and he is twenty. What is a kiss to these people? It is nothing!"

October came in cold and crisp, at last. The wonderful garden was all ready for winter. The outside doors were shut, and the warm mists from the kitchen filled the little cabin

One afternoon the work was done early and Pierrette was sitting by the window sewing. It was a gray, chilly day, and the indefinable sadness of autumn was heavy in the air. The happy young girl felt it in spite of her joy. Every one knew now that André Reboul was her lover. Pierre and Marie were not pleased. They did not see how they were going to get along without Pierrette, and they felt a certain fear of the still, harsh-voiced young fellow who had come among them so recently. The mother muttered fretfully when Pierrette went into the little shed for wood and André followed after her, ostensibly to help her, but really, as Marie knew, to snatch a kiss from her proud daughter.

"Who knows what he thinks, or what he has been doing all his life?" she flung out crossly to her daughter.

"He is Adolph Roney's sister's son," returned Pierrette calmly, but with a bright red spot burning in each cheek.

"Oh, how he mumbled when he told your father that he wanted you!" sniffed the older woman. "And who are the Roneys? What kind of a kitchen does Marie Roney keep? And such soup! And the beds! Adolph Roney! Faugh!"

Pierrette's face flamed angrily, but still she said nothing. She thought of the silent mountains. Like Killington and Pico, her lover and she were to stand side by side forever.

As she sat this afternoon, looking out at the ugly, deep-rutted road, and glancing now and then to where the smoke was curling up from the woods in the direction of the old kiln, she saw the Sherbury stage coming. It stopped in front of Adolph Roney's—a most uncommon proceeding—and a woman was helped out of it. She was a young woman, though apparently some years older than Pierrette, and was very smartly dressed. Through her flimsy dotted veil her face shone red and white. Pierrette gazed fixedly at this strange vision. Her work fell from her hands. The little school-house near by began to belch forth a tumultuous stream of girls and boys. These also saw the new-comer picking

her way daintily up the path which led from the street to Adolph Roney's door. The white-haired old Frenchman happened to be at home, and he stood staring at the woman, who was evidently an unexpected guest. The children stood still in a body and contemplated the scene with undisguised interest. When Pierrette saw them she resumed her work. She was not going to stare like them.

Some time elapsed—long enough for the children to disperse to their homes—and then Adolph Roney came out of his door with the stranger. They turned toward the cabin of the Beaubiens. Pierrette felt a strange sinking at heart as she saw them. Perhaps they would go past. No—they stopped and came up to the door. They knocked, and Pierrette went to let them in. Her strong young frame trembled when she saw that Adolph Roney's kind old face looked troubled. The face of the young woman with him looked saucy—even insolent.

"This is Miss Delia Redmond, Pierrette," he said, briefly. Pierrette nodded her head stiffly and glared at the gaudily-arrayed creature before her.

"I suppose André is down at the old kiln?" went on Adolph Roney. Pierrette nodded again, speechlessly.

"You can come in and wait for him, madame," he said courteously to his companion.

"I guess I won't," snapped the young woman, with a viciousness which completed Pierrette's horrible dismay. "He'll be surprised enough to see me. I'll come over after supper. I want the fun of walking right in on him."

There was a disagreeable tang to her words.

"Don't say anything about my coming, please," she concluded as she turned away. She made a supercilious gesture toward the French girl, and gave her a brilliant, ugly smile as a parting salute.

Delia Redmond was fair-skinned and blue-eyed—an Irish girl, as Pierrette could tell by her talk, though she had used French words as though she could talk French if she chose. She had an experienced, self-confident air. She evidently knew what she was about.

In her fierce, undisciplined young soul Pierrette Beaubien hated her.

It was six o'clock, and the blackened troop of charcoal-burners came straggling along the road to their suppers. Among them came André Reboul. Pierrette hardly knew what she was doing as she put the victuals upon the table. The men ate heartily, but she could not taste of the porridge which her mother had seasoned so carefully. Every moment she kept imagining that she heard footsteps at the door and that Delia Redmond was coming. But the men finished eating, and yet she had not come.

Pierrette now could only long for a chance to tell André of the expected visitor. He ought to be warned against this wicked creature, who, Pierrette felt sure, meant no good to him.

As she passed the window, the moon—a glorious hunter's moon—was just rising. She would ask him to come and see it.

"Look, André," she whispered, pointing up at it; "come out on the doorstep with me, and watch the moon rise."

As the door closed behind them, she caught his hand eagerly.

"Some one is coming to see you right away, André," she stammered, incoherently. "She will be here before you know it. She has some grudge against you, I think. She says her name is Delia Redmond. Who is she, André?"

"What do you say, Pierrette?" he asked, staring at her, and his thick French sounding thicker than usual.

"Delia—Delia Redmond. She is coming. *Mon Dieu!* I fancy I hear her this minute! She seems angry with you. She says she wants to surprise you."

"D——n her!" he muttered. He looked around, as though with a sudden impulse to escape. There had been such a look on Larle Pichaud's face when the woman had come—a woman whom the stage brought, just as it had brought Delia Redmond—to accuse him. An awful fear, which had been gathering in Pierrette's

innocent heart for the past hour, began to put on a definite, blood-curdling shape.

"What will she do to you, André?" she whispered, weeping and winding her strong young arms around him. "Run away and hide, André! Quick! I will see her. Oh, I will tear her eyes out! I will kill her!"

"No, no!" he muttered; "I will see her, and I will make it right with her. I can't now, but I can soon—very soon—and then I will tell you all about it, Pierrette. I should not have done it, but——"

He stopped abruptly and shook himself from Pierrette's trembling embrace. There was a patter of footsteps on the path. Adolph Roney had come, and with him was Delia Redmond.

André braced his broad back against the door and faced the new-comers, looking straight into the woman's smirking countenance. The moon shone full upon him.

"Good-evening, Mr. Reboul," she said in French, and with an affectation of great deference. "I suppose you thought you had hidden yourself pretty well, but I have found you at last. Where is that letter that you promised I should have a month ago?"

"I have found you at last!" Those were the exact words of the woman who had attacked Larle Pichaud. Pierrette heard nothing more. She slunk to one side among the shadows, and leaned fainting against a lilac bush which grew there. Then a sudden flare of light appeared, as some one from within opened the door. When she came to herself, she saw André walking off with Adolph and the woman in the direction of the Roneys'. She was completely chilled through, but she felt as though she could not face the scrutiny of her father and mother. Where would she go to get warm? Oh, there was the old kiln! There was a great fire going there, she knew, and the passage-way dug in the earth was dark and shut away from all peering eyes.

"A man was killed there once, I know," she murmured dully to herself, "but I am not afraid. I should not care if I were killed, too. At least, I should be warm there—and what have I to live for, anyway?

People will despise me after this, if I cling to André—just as I despised Fernande Pichaud. Everybody will know about this woman by to-morrow, and how they will hoot at me in their homes. They will say, 'That proud girl of Pierre Beaubien's was deceived, as if she had been any common empty-headed thing.' For that Delia Redmond must have loved André, just as that poor woman had loved Larle Pichaud—and he might have—yes—he might have told her that he loved her and have kissed her as he kissed me. Oh, if I had only died last night! Then I should never have known this! Yet I love him so! I would give anything to have him fold me in his arms just once more!"

Growing wilder and wilder as she stumbled on, she reached the old kiln. The great, rough door at the end of the passage-way fell toward her as she pulled at it, and bruised her, but she lifted it easily and put it in place behind her. As she had mused, the fire within her had burned. When she had made the place all dark and close, she threw herself on the earth—warm and grateful from the fire so near—and sobbed despairingly.

"Mother of God!" she prayed, over and over. "My heart is broken! Help me! Help me!"

. . . . . .

The next morning André Reboul came down to his kiln. He was in a daze of unhappiness between his experiences of the previous evening and the disappearance of Pierrette, for whom he and several others had spent a large part of the night in searching. André knew nothing of the story of Larle Pichaud, or else he might have conducted himself differently during the scenes of the last evening. He was coming down to see if the various fires in his kiln were going, and then he was prepared to resume the search for Pierrette. Suddenly he saw the fresh footprints leading toward the old kiln, and with an ominous sinking at heart he followed them down to the long-unused door. With shaking hands he pulled at the old timbers, and in a moment the white light was shining upon the prostrate form of Pierrette.

With a groan of horror he dropped upon his knees beside her. He had heard the story of the chilled workman's death, if he had not heard of the scandal regarding Larle Pichaud. The place was full of gases from the burning charcoal. In a wild hope that the fresh air might revive her he lifted her and bore her out into the sunshine. He chafed her hands and bathed her face with water from a spring close by, but when she still gave no sign of life he threw himself down in an agony of despair and grovelled among the dried leaves that were heaped about her.

"Oh, Pierrette!" he cried, bending above her again, in a last vain hope of making her hear him; "don't you see how it was? I owed Delia Redmond some money for ten weeks' board. I spent the money in a lottery, and I lost it all. Wake up! It will be all right, Pierrette—I am earning so much now! I was ashamed to have you know that I had been so thriftless! I would not have had your father and mother know it for anything. I would have been afraid he would not have let me have you. They said she liked me, Pierrette, but I never liked her. I never kissed her, *mignonne!* It was as I said—I never loved any one but you! Oh, wake up, wake up!"

But all his endearments were powerless to arouse her, and still murmuring fond, formless words into her deaf ears, he struggled up to her father's house, carrying her in his arms. The doctor was summoned from Sherbury at once, but Pierrette never breathed again.

. . . . . .

On the side of old Pico, deep among its tangled thickets, lives a hermit, morose and shaggy-bearded, and following all the traditions of his kind. He subsists only upon the mountain growths and the game and fish of the woods. The few people who have heard him speak say that he talks only in thick, guttural French. There is a vague story afloat among the mountains that years ago he had a love-affair which did not go right and which broke his heart and made him crazy—but this

tale is treated with light incredulity by the tourists who hear it.

"We read about such things in old-fashioned romantic stories," they laugh, "but they don't happen in these degenerate days—especially among the 'lower orders.'"

On the top of Sherbury Mountain the smoke still ascends to the sky from the kilns of Smoke City. Dropped in among them is a lovely garden—as though a star had fallen from heaven into its rough streets. It is tended by a bent little old Frenchman and his wrinkled wife. If you pause to praise it, the tears will gather in their eyes and they will say, "Oh, you should have seen it when our daughter—our own Pierrette!—took care of it. She was strong as a man, and so beautiful! Every one turned to look at her when she went by! The flowers would bloom if she but told them to. Alas! our garden will never look the same again. You have heard the story, monsieur? No? Ah! It will break your heart. You would like to hear it?"

And you will forget the smoke and the shouts of the charcoal-burners in listening to the broken words in which the old couple tell you of the tragedy of their lives, over which they brood and brood, alas! through all the changing years.

This ingenious combination of monologue and pantomime is by Abraham Dreyfus, and was given by Mrs. Agnes Booth and M. Coquelin during the season of 1890–91, at Palmer's Theatre. It is not possible to indicate the shades of expression that belong to the pantomime. These must be left to the intelligence of the actor. He should, however, be warned that the audience must not take Monsieur for a mute, but for a man whose speech is continually cut off by the volubility of his wife.

AN OAK IN A STORM.

Dramatis Personæ.

MONSIEUR. MADAME.

SCENE.

Boudoir; fireplace in the background; doors right and left; two easy-chairs by the fire, lounge in the left foreground; small table at right, on which is water, glass, bowl of sugar.

MADAME [*alone.*] [*She is seated near the fire, holding in her hand some embroidery at which she works with feverish energy. After a few moments she looks at the clock.*]

[*In a dull voice.*] Eleven o'clock! [*A pause. In a voice slightly hysterical.*] Eleven o'clock!! [*Sounds of steps without. She gives a sigh of relief.*] Ah! At last! [*She takes up her work again.*]

Monsieur *enters.*

MONSIEUR—[*He comes in gayly, and advances to greet his wife with outstretched arms.*]

[*Madame does not budge. She has not raised her eyes, but works steadily. Monsieur stops and looks at his wife uneasily.*]

[*But she seems calm, even if she has not noticed him. Ah, she has not heard him come in. Monsieur smiles, and going softly behind her, starts to kiss her on the neck, when she draws herself up to her full height.*]

MADAME—[*looks at him with scorn.*]

MONSIEUR—[*stupefied, steps toward her.*]

MADAME [*stepping backward.*]—Do not touch me, sir!

MONSIEUR [*attempts to speak.*]—....

MADAME—Do not touch me! [*She starts toward the door of her room.*]

MONSIEUR [*follows her with his eyes.*]—....

MADAME [*at the door of her room — solemnly*] — After to-day there is nothing more between us. [*She goes into her room.*]

MONSIEUR — [*advances quickly toward her, but the door shuts on his nose.*]

MONSIEUR [*alone.*]—[*He is astounded. What has happened? Is his wife angry, or is this a joke? He begins to laugh. Then to reassure himself he listens at the door. He hears nothing. Decidedly this is serious; there is thunder in the air. Very well. Here goes for a storm. This is not the first he has seen. The best thing is to let it blow over.*]

[Monsieur *goes to the fireplace, warms his feet, first one, then the other, rubbing his hands together vigorously; then he takes a newspaper, and throwing himself on the lounge, begins it with great deliberation.*]

MADAME [*comes out of her room and places herself before Monsieur.*]—Do you think I am going to stand this sort of thing?

MONSIEUR [*very much surprised.*]—....

MADAME—Do you think that after waiting all evening for you I am going to stop all by myself in a room without fire, while you are here leisurely warming your feet and reading your paper?

MONSIEUR [*starts to get up.*]—....

MADAME—Sit still, I beg of you. It would disturb me very much to incommode you. I can understand that after five hours away from your home you have need of rest.

MONSIEUR [*attempts to answer.*]—....

MADAME—I regret only that I was obliged to sit up for you. If I had known that you would not come home until after midnight——

MONSIEUR [*looks at the clock.*]—....

MADAME—I beg your pardon, that clock is at least an hour slow. It is now half-past twelve.

MONSIEUR [*looks at his watch.*]—....

MADAME—But that is all the same to you. What do

you care for that? You would as lief come in at two o'clock, at three o'clock, at six o'clock in the morning.

MONSIEUR [*tries to protest.*]—....

MADAME—An orgy more or less, what is that to you?

MONSIEUR [*still tries to protest.*]—....

MADAME—Oh, I know you. I know your capabilities when once you are launched in the——

MONSIEUR [*smiles.*]—....

MADAME—Oh, you smile. Mockery suits the life you are living. It is one grace the more, to your cynicism, your depravity; it is the highest touch of elegance.

MONSIEUR [*surveys himself.*]—....

MADAME—And without doubt you have triumphed. How many hearts have you enchained to your chariot?

MONSIEUR [*looks foolish.*]—....

MADAME—And were there many women at this dinner of men?

MONSIEUR [*repulses the thought.*]—....

MADAME—I know what you would say—a banquet of tariff reformers, was it not? All learned, all married men, only truly good men, presided over by an octogenarian. They would have liked to have had their wives, but—it is against the rules. What a pity! These ladies would have been in good company; they would have laughed with you, drunk with you. How gay it would have been, this dinner of tariff reformers!

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—It has not been lively? How sad for you! You love a good time. You help furnish it on occasion.

MONSIEUR [*modestly.*]—....

MADAME—At least, so I am told; for my part I have never perceived——

MONSIEUR [*protesting.*]—....

MADAME—You keep your amiability for others.

MONSIEUR [*smiling, approaches her.*]—....

MADAME [*passing before him.*]—No, sir! No! Return to your friends. I disdain any attempt to rival them. I am only your wife. I have not the happiness of being thin enough to please your taste.

MONSIEUR [*holds up his hands.*]—....

MADAME—One must now be thin—a cloud, a vapor.

MONSIEUR [*lets them drop hopelessly.*]—....

MADAME—Oh, I know your tastes now. Any one can divine them easily. It is sufficient only to have seen Madame Tourimel to know that what you admire is a bundle of rags.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—And this person dares to come to my house.

MONSIEUR [*softly.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, get angry. It is revolting, astounding; how can I give tongue to such an accusation? M. Tourimel, is he not your best friend? You were at the same college, you belong to the same administration, you were his best man. Yes, and you continue your interest in his domestic affairs. What more natural?

MONSIEUR [*reconciles himself.*]—....

MADAME—Only I ought not to conceal from you, my dear, that your lunching there as frequently as you do naturally excites remark.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—Oh, without doubt you have a good reason. M. Tourimel lives near the office. You have not time to come home to lunch, so you go home with Tourimel. Nothing more simple. If people will talk——

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—You know very well that I am not one of those women who run the streets from morning till night. I stay at home. I——

[*Up to this point*, Madame *has not ceased speaking. She has launched her phrases without a pause. But with this last sentence*, "I stay at home. I——" *she stops to breathe.* Monsieur, *thinking she has finished, and that it is his turn, makes ready.*]

MONSIEUR [*opening his mouth.*]—....

MADAME [*begins again.*]—If it pleases Monsieur Tourimel to keep open house, he is free to do it. Every one governs his house as he will.

MONSIEUR [*discouraged.*]—....

MADAME—But how does he sustain such luxury? That is between his conscience and himself. How he can provide his wife with such magnificent toilettes is more than I know.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—Ah, my dear, I only say what is said everywhere. Madame Tourimel is very elegant for the daughter of an old drummer.

MONSIEUR [*surprised*]—....

MADAME—Yes, of an old drummer. I have seen him. It was he who used to bring my father tickets for the concerts of the National Guard. I have these tickets. I can show them to you any time.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—You do not believe me. I can understand that. It would profane your ideal. The aureole that surrounds this goddess must not be sullied.

MONSIEUR [*annoyed.*]—....

MADAME—Ah, pardon! I did not know you were so susceptible. In future I will try not to allude to Madame Tourimel. All that she does will be perfect. She may take from me the heart of my husband, she may take the father from his children, she may bring ruin and despair into this once happy home, and I will not complain; I will say nothing. I will find all this very natural, very just, very honest——

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—Is this sufficient? Are you content with this act of abnegation, or must I go and throw myself at the feet of Madame Tourimel and beg her to accept the devotion of my husband?

MONSIEUR [*At this point* Monsieur *begins to speak, but stops and contents himself with shrugging his shoulders and turning his back.*]

MADAME—So! You take yourself off. It is better to do that when you have nothing to say.

MONSIEUR [*turns again.*]—....

MADAME—What have you to say in your defence?

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—Nothing. You have nothing to say. You

cannot find a word; not a word. Nothing! Nothing!! Nothing!!!

MONSIEUR [*goes toward her.*]—....

MADAME—Very well. Here I am. Strike me.

MONSIEUR [*stupefied.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, strike me!

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—What prevents you? You are the strongest. You are master here. Oh, have no fear! I will not defend myself.

MONSIEUR [*Again he thinks he will speak; but what can he say? The best thing he can do is to go away. That is what he will do. He starts toward the door.*]

MADAME—Ah, you have concluded not to strike me. You perhaps fear I will call for help.

MONSIEUR [*goes back again.*]—....

MADAME—You are wrong. I shall not expose the secrets of the fireside. I am not a person to make a market of scandal, or who will profit by shame.

MONSIEUR [*decides not to answer.*]

MADAME [*repeating.*]—Profit.

MONSIEUR [*looks at the ceiling.*]

MADAME [*furious.*]—Do you not know it?

MONSIEUR [*He takes a paper and sits down before the fire.*]

MADAME—Ah, you are determined not to speak? You read your papers? That is the easiest way out of it. [*She goes toward him.*] There are men who would have cared enough to justify themselves; who, seeing their wives suffering, unhappy, tormented—wrong perhaps! but suffering very cruelly—who would have tried to reassure them by an affectionate word, a friendly gesture, a compassionate look. Is it so difficult to feel for those who love you?

MONSIEUR [*moved, lets his paper fall.*]

MADAME—What, then, is it that I ask? Only to tell me where you went after the banquet—if there really was a banquet.

MONSIEUR [*eagerly.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, very well, I will admit that there was;

but you must allow that it is strange that you did not get home until after midnight——

MONSIEUR [*endeavors to speak.*]—....

MADAME—Very well, I will say midnight, when the banquet was over at nine o'clock, or half-past nine at the latest.

MONSIEUR [*again essays to speak.*]—....

MADAME—You yourself said so.

MONSIEUR [*again tries.*]—....

MADAME—I am astonished.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—I am uneasy.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—I question.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME [*bursting into tears.*]—You do not wish to tell me. [*She falls weeping on to the lounge.*]

MONSIEUR [*looks at her pityingly.*]—....

MADAME—Ah, mother! mother! You said that one day your child would have tears to weep.

MONSIEUR [*overwhelmed.*]—....

MADAME—Ah, this is nothing. It is only the beginning of my unhappiness.

MONSIEUR [*approaching her.*]—....

MADAME [*repulsing him.*]—Leave me! I have no need of your hypocritical consolation. You wanted me to weep. I weep. What would you have more?

MONSIEUR [*Now he is at the end of his patience. He walks up and down the room.*]

MADAME—Oh, I am very ridiculous, am I not? Is it because I am crying? I suppose I ought to accustom myself to the situation. How many women there are who are neglected by their husbands and who live none the less tranquilly. All marriages cannot be broken up because wives are neglected. Ours was the occasion of so many happy circumstances. Everybody rejoiced—except my poor old Aunt Rosalie. She saw clearly.

MONSIEUR [*is before the mantel, his back to the audience. At this last word he turns.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, sir, she saw distinctly, notwithstand-

ing her eighty-five years. She said to me, "My child, strengthen yourself. You are marrying a man who is too knowing."

MONSIEUR [*protesting.*]—....

MADAME—You appeared too knowing. A man who has made himself talked about as a young man, and who brings into his household the habits of dissipation and misconduct——

MONSIEUR [*For some moments he has shown signs of impatience more and more energetic. At the word* "misconduct" *he breaks a wooden paper-knife that he has found on the mantel.*]

MADAME—You understand; you can only break things. That is your way of answering.

MONSIEUR [*He is about to break out. But no, he will not permit himself to give way to anger. He feels that he will stifle. In order to calm himself he goes to the table and pours out a glass of water.*]

MADAME—Ah, you are thirsty. That is not strange, after the dinner of this evening.

MONSIEUR [*He puts it to his lips, but changes his mind; and taking some sugar makes a glass of eau sucrée.*]

MADAME—Well, really, a little sugar, and now some orange-flower water; very good that; it will sustain you.

MONSIEUR [*tastes his glass silently.*]

MADAME [*furiously.*]—I would thank you when you wish to drink *eau sucrée* not to prepare it in my boudoir.

MONSIEUR [*having drunk, wipes his lips silently.*]

[*Another pause.*]

MADAME [*exasperated.*]—The other day you let some drops of syrup fall on the velvet of my *prie-Dieu.*

MONSIEUR [*with an air of polite but cold regret.*]—.... [*He places the glass again on the table.*]

MADAME [*explosively.*]—I need my *prie-Dieu* more than ever. What would become of me if I could not pray? Thanks to Heaven! I have not been taught to despise the solace of my religion, and you shall never force me to it.

MONSIEUR [*smiling.*]—....

MADAME—Oh, I know your theories. It is those which have led you to forget in turn your duties and to abandon your family, as you have abandoned religion, as you have abandoned morality.

MONSIEUR [*resigned to everything, is silent.*]

MADAME [*quickly.*]—What did you say?

MONSIEUR [*immovable.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, smile, Monsieur Free Thinker. You can never make me forget the lessons of my mother. And my mother was a very intelligent woman. Do you hear?

MONSIEUR [*shrugging his shoulders.*]—....

MADAME—Do you doubt it? Ah, but one thing was wanting—this insult to my mother!

MONSIEUR [*raising his arms to heaven.*]

MADAME [*sobbing.*]—And what day have you chosen for this! The day that my family always celebrated, and in which I recall all the sweet joys of my childhood—my birthday!

MONSIEUR [*looks at his wife as if overwhelmed.*]—....

MADAME—Yes, this is the day of Saint Felicie, and you never remembered it.

MONSIEUR—....

MADAME—Admit that you never thought of it—never thought of it!

MONSIEUR [*wants to speak.*]—....

MADAME—Stop, don't speak. It is not necessary to prevaricate.

MONSIEUR [*looks at the audience as if to take them to witness; then he turns to his wife smiling.*]—....

MADAME—Eh, what! What have you there? Speak.

MONSIEUR [*still silent, takes out of his pocket a case that he opens and hands to his wife.*]—....

MADAME—A bracelet! For me? [*Examines it, reading aloud the inscription.*] "Felicie." That is why you were so late. [*Effusively.*] Ah, dear Charles, how kind you are! How I love you! [*She throws herself upon his neck.*]

[CURTAIN.]

People sometimes say that "nothing succeeds like success." This is one of those half truths so frequently on the lips of men—if indeed it be a truth at all; certainly the facts set out by William McKendree Bangs in this story from *The Epoch* seem to give the lie to the musty proverb.

THE WINNING NUMBER.

Some years ago, Harry Sinclair, a tall, light-haired, gentle-featured and restless young man, sat in the office where he waited almost vainly for clients, brooding over his poverty and wondering where he would be able to find the money he needed for the support of his wife and himself. He was sharpening, as his thoughts ran on, the already fine point of a steel spindle upon which he sometimes filed papers needing early attention.

"I'll be hanged if I know what to do!" he said at last aloud. He had thought himself alone and he was surprised by the "What is the matter?" which met his ears in response.

Turning, he saw his brother-in-law, John Raymond, who had entered without noise. He was a little afraid of Raymond, for Raymond was of the strong and resolute kind, and he had struggled hard to achieve the success which would have been his had he not been so handicapped by the heavy drafts made upon him for the expenses of his home, a home shared by his mother, his sister and that sister's husband, Harry Sinclair, who had never been able to contribute his share, and who, latterly, had not been able to contribute anything. Sinclair felt his obligation and he knew how the want of ready money had crippled Raymond's business.

"Oh, poverty!" he explained now to Raymond, who, indeed, needed no explanation. "I'll be hanged if I know what to do," he repeated, "but we might," he went on as some item in the newspaper he held in his

hands caught his eye—"but we might buy a lottery ticket."

"That is worth a sane man's consideration, is it not?" Raymond asked, laughing a little contemptuously. "You will so certainly win."

The thought had come to Sinclair suddenly and he had expressed it almost as a joke; but now as he thought how sadly he needed money and of how little chance he had to make it in his profession, the idea grew upon him, and at length he rose and, going to where Raymond stood, he put his hand upon his shoulder and said with determination:

"I'll do it. I have known stranger things to happen than the winning of a prize. I will buy a ticket."

"Nonsense, Harry! You are not serious."

"I am—I mean to do it. And I want you to join me."

"Do you doubt your ability to take care of the enormous amount you will win, that you want me to join you?"

"No; not exactly that, John. But we will buy two tickets, and so double the chances, and divide the risk. The cost will be very small to each of us."

"Yes; but the winnings will be smaller," Raymond said, replying only to the last of Sinclair's explanation. "Surely you are not serious, Harry?" he continued.

"I am. Upon my word, I was never more serious in my life!" Sinclair responded earnestly.

"But here you are a sworn officer of the State proposing to break its laws!" Raymond said, laughing, although his words were serious.

"True enough, John; but I do not believe I run much danger of punishment. No one will attempt to disbar me, I fancy. But really I mean to insist that you join me."

"Pshaw, Harry! I do not want to be guilty of any share in such folly."

"I will accept the responsibility," Sinclair replied quickly; "the folly is all mine. You are to join me simply because I ask you to."

"Oh, very well, if you really wish me to," Raymond responded carelessly, still laughing.

Sinclair was surprised, for he knew that it was not like Raymond to do anything he disapproved of, no matter who might urge him—no matter what the inducement offered to him might be. He had, it is true, spoken to Raymond imperatively; but he had, nevertheless, expected that he would decline. To Raymond, however, the matter seemed one of no importance whatever, and he then saw no good reason why he should refuse to gratify Sinclair. He was soon, it is true, ashamed that he had consented to join in the venture; but then, at the worst, it seemed to him but a small folly, to be soon forgotten, as he hoped. He could not foresee that its consequences would prove it to have been quite the most important and disastrous action of his life. Sinclair lost no time, and the next morning he found with little difficulty a place where he could make the purchase, and that night he managed to be alone with Raymond, and then he showed him gleefully the tickets.

"Here is our fortune, John," he said. "I am sure that we shall win something, and something well worth our while, too."

"Very good, Harry," Raymond answered, a little scornfully. "Keep the tickets very carefully."

"I shall certainly do that, unless—unless you take them. I am rather careless, you know. Perhaps you had better keep them."

"No, decidedly no!" Raymond replied with some vehemence. "I am not willing to be bothered with them. I do not want to be reminded of my folly either."

"I am sorry you feel so badly about it all, John, but you will feel better, much better, before very long."

Raymond, left to himself, would probably have been able to dismiss all thought of their foolish venture, as he called it; but, almost daily, Sinclair spoke to him concerning it, and of his faith that they were destined to win a large prize. Raymond grew very tired of it all, and continued to heartily wish that he had not

permitted himself to be drawn into the absurd scheme. As Sinclair continued to speak of the matter, Raymond grew almost angry and begged him not to, and Sinclair for a little time would remember; but soon he would find it as impossible as before to be silent on this subject, in which alone he was now interested. As time went on toward the day of the drawing, these constant reminders had greater and greater effect upon Raymond, and he found himself growing nervous and irritaible. That this was so, annoyed him.

"Well, John," said Sinclair to him one day, "have you decided what you shall do with your share of this fortune?"

"Yes, I shall give it to my bootblack," Raymond replied angrily.

"What a different tale you will tell when the time comes!" Sinclair good-naturedly responded. "But I know what we shall do—Alice and I."

"Do you? What?"

"We shall go abroad and stay as long as we care to."

"Oh, Harry, you are improvident, even in your fancies," Raymond expostulated.

"But, you see, when we return, we shall have so much that we need not worry if the clients do not come at once. This will be so unusual," he continued, "that I hardly think we ought to regard the money as we should the ordinary proceeds of business. I shall spend most of mine with thorough self-approval."

"And then be in trouble again. Pshaw, Harry!" he went on impatiently, "you ought to know by now how to care for the money you do get."

"But what will you do with yours?" Sinclair asked again.

"Put it in my business, of course."

Raymond was angry. Sinclair's expression of his careless intentions made him so; and his annoyance was increased by his betrayal into a serious statement of his own plans. He laughed; but his laugh was an impatient one and far from merry.

"But this will not do, Harry," he said, as though to

make light of it. "What nonsense it is to discuss in this way what we are to do with money we shall never see. I don't propose to think of it again."

"Just as you like, John; but I know that we shall see the money, and I like to think of it."

As the day of the drawing came nearer, Sinclair grew more and more elated. To Raymond he spoke of nothing else than the money he was so sure that they would draw, and of the disposition he would make of his share. He elaborated his plan for foreign travel, and he selected with great care and detail the route he and his wife would follow. He asked Raymond, though laughingly, to engage to meet them upon some certain day in Paris to lunch with them at a café the name of which he gave, and upon a dish already determined upon. Raymond would not talk again of the matter, and by no sign did he show whether or not he hoped, too, but in spite of himself he had found Sinclair's hopefulness and faith infectious, and he often debated with himself whether to extend his business, as he knew that he could profitably with an increased capital, or whether it would be better for him to invest in some other way whatever money should come to him. It would be pleasant, he reflected, to feel in dull and depressed times that he was not altogether dependent upon his business, and he remembered that it had often seemed to him that the days upon which his rent became due had come very close one upon another. He would be very glad, he thought, to own a little house somewhere, even if it should have to be in the suburbs, in which he and his mother might live comfortably, and in which, too, there might be room for his sister and Harry. He asked himself where real property would be most apt to rise in value, and promised himself that he would consult, when the time should come, with certain friends whose acquaintance with such matters was greater than his own, and whose judgment was more reliable.

The day of the drawing came, and within a day or two Sinclair told Raymond that he had been prom-

ised a list of the prizes by the first mail of the next day.

"Come in early," he went on. "I promise not to open the envelope until you come, so that we may share together the pleasure of finding our numbers there. But, please, don't be late, for I shall be very impatient."

John Raymond's business required an early attendance, and he always left his home long before Sinclair was ready. So it was on this morning; and when Sinclair reached his office, to his surprise, he found Raymond waiting for him.

"Hullo, John!" he said cheerily. "You are early. Your faith has grown. You do believe! I knew that you would."

"It was easier to come now than it would be later. Besides, let us get through with this folly and be done with it all."

"There is nothing here yet. We must wait for the tardy postman."

"Are you sure that it is not there?" Raymond asked, as he pointed to some old letters.

"Quite sure, I think, John; but I will see, if you like," Sinclair answered.

He was amused at Raymond's impatient manner, but he gravely and quietly looked, as he was asked to, without finding the list they hoped for. Then the carrier came and handed Sinclair another letter.

"Here it is," he said excitedly, as he looked at the postmark. "Now we shall see."

Raymond rose, and standing close behind him looked over Sinclair's shoulder as he spread the sheet covered with figures before him on the desk.

"What are the numbers of our tickets?" Raymond asked.

"Here is a memorandum," Sinclair replied, as he took from the spindle on his desk a small piece of paper. "What is the first one?"

"Five thousand six hundred and thirty-seven."

"Five—five, fifty-four hundred," Sinclair said, as he

slowly ran his finger down the long column; "fifty-six hundred and thirty-two. That is very close, but it will not quite do."

"No; but hurry," Raymond responded, making now no pretence to hide his anxiety. "Nineteen thousand, two hundred and forty is the other. Hurry!"

"Are you sure? Are you sure? For here it is," and Sinclair, overcome, let his head fall upon his arms now spread upon the desk before him.

"Let me see," said Raymond, and he took the sheet carefully from Harry. He went to the window, and, his eyes burning, he found the number there and saw that they had won many thousands of dollars. For a minute he looked out and tried to realize all that it meant to them. It had come; he was to be independent and all of them would be happy.

His knees shook, and he was glad to support himself for a minute, leaning on the back of a chair. Soon he regained his self-control and then he looked at Sinclair, who still had his face buried in his arms. Occasionally he would sob, and all his body would shake. He was all broken. At length Raymond went to him and put his hand upon his shoulder.

"Come, come, Harry," he said, "do you know how much we have won? Thousands, it says."

Sinclair looked up and tried to smile. Then he laughed weakly, his eyes full of tears, while Raymond sat quietly looking at him.

"Is it not glorious?" Sinclair asked hysterically. "Is it not glorious? Did I not tell you we should win?"

"But the ticket—" Raymond said at last gravely. "Let me see that you have made no mistake."

"I have not, I am sure; but here it is," Sinclair replied as he took from his pocket-book the two small pieces of paper and handed them to the other. Raymond looked carefully at them and compared them with the list.

"It is all right," he said at last. "But come, can we arrange to have it collected?"

"Yes, at once. I shall not be happy until we have the money."

As they walked along the street they were silent for several minutes. Raymond was busy in his thoughts, making many calculations and trying again to decide what would be best for him to do; but Sinclair seemed to be in a dream. He was weak, and once or twice he leaned heavily on Raymond's arm.

"John," he said after a while, "I do not understand why I feel so. I am strangely weak."

"You will be all right directly. But," and Raymond looked keenly at Sinclair's face, "if you are not well, let me have the ticket. You can go back to the office and wait."

"No, no! but come in here for a minute," Sinclair replied, as they passed a saloon. "We do not often drink; but now it will do me good. Besides, we have the right to celebrate a little."

They were both abstemious men and not accustomed to stimulants, yet the drink did not apparently disturb Raymond, who was cool and collected; but in his already excited condition and exalted mood it had an immediate and great effect upon Sinclair. He talked wildly and gesticulated violently. Again and again he repeated, "Did I not tell you it would be so?" And he reproached Raymond that he had tried to dissuade him from the venture, and that he had had so little faith.

Arrived at the express office whose correspondent would make the collection, as Sinclair had been told, the negotiations were easily and quickly conducted, and then Sinclair took from his pocket the pocket-book in which he had kept the tickets. He searched it carefully, but his face fell and he grew pale. The ticket was not there. He looked at the contents of his pockets; he emptied them, one by one. He could not find it.

"What does this mean?" Raymond, who watched Sinclair closely, asked impatiently. "What does this mean?" he repeated. "If you have lost it, I'll——"

"Wait! wait!" interrupted Sinclair, and his voice was

thick and hoarse. "It is all right. I must have left it at the office. We must go back."

"Come, then, and waste no time," Raymond said angrily. "Why did I trust you with it?"

They walked rapidly and silently back. To Raymond had come quickly and unreasonably the fear that his share of the fortune upon which they had almost placed their hands had been snatched from him. In all his life he had not built himself any house of cards until in this case he had been moved to do so by Sinclair's confidence and by his, at last, convincing reiteration of his faith. Then he had built one high and of noble proportions. Now, as it fell about him, he was helplessly and hopelessly overwhelmed. Not for a minute did he think that there was any chance to rebuild it; he felt certain that the ticket would never be found. He was hurt; he was enraged. Never had he so surrendered himself as he began to do now to his anger. In a minute or two his surrender was absolute. Then, suddenly, a suspicion took quick possession of him. He looked sternly and sharply at Sinclair.

"Why," he asked himself—"why was he unwilling to let me have the ticket?" But he said no word aloud.

Nothing in the office had been disturbed in their absence. Sinclair began a hurried but careful search among the papers on the desk, in the drawers, and even on the floor. He looked everywhere.

Raymond stood quietly by, a little scornful smile playing over his thin lips; his face was livid and his eyes blazing.

"How could you lose it?" he asked. "Half of that money was mine—was mine, do you hear? You have robbed me."

Sinclair made a further search, but found nothing. Then he again buried his face in his arms outstretched upon the desk and sobbed as he had before. Raymond's suspicion grew in strength. He had thought nothing of Sinclair's weakness before; now it seemed to him a mere pretence, a pretence which should deceive no one.

"You scoundrel!" he said, with almost a hiss. "You

are trying to defraud me. You are trying to rob me. You shall not succeed. Empty your pockets. Come, or I will search them myself."

Sinclair made no response; he did not raise his head. Raymond went to him and tried to lift him.

"You scoundrel!" he repeated. "Come, be done with this farce! Was it not enough that you should have lived upon my bounty all this time? What a fool I was to trust you!"

Sinclair seemed now to realize for the first time what it was that Raymond was accusing him of, or he was stung, for he stood up suddenly and faced the angry man. His eyes were red and he trembled slightly.

"John——" he began, but Raymond in his anger would listen to no explanation.

"You thief!" he shouted again. "How far will you try to carry this? Am I a fool that you think you can so impose upon me? I want my share of the fortune we have won. I will have it."

"You know that I have lost the ticket," Sinclair said helplessly.

"I do not believe you. I have half a mind to— I will." And Raymond struck Sinclair a hard blow in the chest. Sinclair staggered and fell backward; then he recovered, and tried to defend himself from Raymond's further attack, but he was much the weaker. Raymond placed his hands on Sinclair's shoulders, and so forced him backward, and down upon the desk. Sinclair fought and struggled; but he could not free himself. Relentlessly, Raymond forced him down. Sinclair's face became purple, and his efforts became more violent; but suddenly he ceased to struggle; his muscles relaxed and he was all limp in Raymond's hands. For a minute longer Raymond looked at him in bitter hate. Then he became alarmed. He released him; but Sinclair did not stir. He shook him; but there was no responsive movement. He ran to get cold water, and dashed it in his face; but it was of no avail. "Harry! Harry!" he cried; "what is it? What is the matter? Come, come, old fellow, you are shamming, I know! For God's sake, speak to me."

Then he opened Sinclair's waistcoat and put his hand upon his heart. He could detect no movement. He lifted him up and saw that he had forced him down upon the sharpened spindle which had stood upright upon the desk. Then as the polished steel was released, it fell upon the desk, and a thin, slight stream of blood ran down the dead man's neck, staining his collar and spreading slowly. Raymond released Sinclair's body gently, and saw the narrow trail of bright red extend itself along the papers. He sat down and looked idly, helpless in his despair, at the lifeless body of his friend. He was overwhelmed. The horror of it all crushed him. He had no feeling, no thought, but remorse and sorrow; his brain for awhile was numb; but in a few minutes he began again to think.

Then he rose and walked quickly to and fro. Even then, as he did so, a little haggard smile came to him, for he remembered that that was one of Sinclair's habits and one that he had always disliked. He wondered then how it would be best for him to surrender himself. He stood debating with himself for a few minutes, and unconsciously he put his hands in his pockets, and one of them encountered a small crisp piece of paper. He drew it out and looked blankly at it. Then as he knew that it was the lost ticket, he tore it into many pieces, and flung them far out of the window. But this discovery had little effect upon him; and his avarice, which had so recently mastered him to his undoing, now no longer controlled him. He could not have touched the money. He only knew that he had quarrelled with his friend, and that friend now lay before him dead. Nothing could lessen or increase his horror and remorse.

Again he tried to decide what it was best for him to do; but he who had always been of quick decision and strong will could now determine nothing. Presently he asked himself whether it would not be as fair to the world and fairer to himself to anticipate the inevitable end of the law's slow procedure, and deal to himself a kinder punishment—a punishment kinder and gentler because quicker. Then from the little eminence of his

own grave he looked back upon all the way he had come. Disposed at that moment to be a hard, cruel judge of all that he had done, he could find small reason to seriously reproach himself except for the venture of the lottery and the last sad loss of his temper and his self-control. His boyhood and his early manhood had been such as most men have led, and if they were not altogether satisfactory to him now in the retrospect, he knew that no great harm had befallen him or any one else because of him. His later life had been one of restraint and endeavor, and if he had sought too keenly for profit and reward, he felt that he had desired profit and reward as much for the sake of his mother and Alice as for his own. His mother and Alice! He had not in this considered them at all; but now thought of them came to him so suddenly that he was startled. He realized at once what their sorrow would be to them, and how great their need would be. Soon, then, his resolution was taken. For them, if not for himself, he would escape and live. He raised one of Sinclair's hands.

"I must do your work as well as my own, old fellow," he said, as though the dead might hear him and understand. "It is all that is left me."

Then he ran rapidly from the room.

His story was never doubted; but some interested in the study of chances asked themselves how many times in ten thousand a man could so reel and fall after a hearty lunch and meet with such an accident.

Before many years, so arduously and so successfully had he struggled, fathers pointed out Raymond to their wayward sons as an example of what, with industry and integrity, a man might accomplish.

"He is very wealthy now," they said, "and it is so easy to remember when he had almost nothing."

But the sons, believing themselves wiser, answered that they would wish to be poorer rather than to make themselves so prematurely old, rather than to stoop so, to be so early gray, and to carry a face so sad that nothing could brighten it.

Unfortunately not all quarrelling couples have a "Babette." The Rev. S. W. Dike's eloquent pleas for a reform in domestic statistics receive a powerful support from this sweet little story, which is copied from *The Argonaut*. It was translated by Isabel Smithson from the French of Georges Price.

THE WISDOM OF A CHILD.

The matter was settled yesterday.

The very mayor who married us eight years before pronounced us divorced, in the same room and before the same witnesses. My wife was accompanied by her father, her mother, and two friends, while my two old comrades, who had assisted at the tying of my pretty love-knot, came, with saddened faces, to witness the severing of the bond.

A stiff bow, exchanged at the beginning and the end of the ceremony, was the only farewell between two beings who for years had never had a thought that was not shared. We sat on a bench, where, five minutes before, had been a smiling bridal pair, and I felt within me an agitation that was painful; there seemed to be a tension at my heart as if my whole being were about to be racked with torture. Was it possible that my companion and confidant, the woman who had consoled and encouraged me in all my trials, the woman I had loved so long and so dearly, could witness without regret, without a thought of the sweet past, the sundering of the bond that had united us?

My glance wandered round the room, from the ugly moulding of the ceiling to the pictures on the wall, but suddenly it rested on a graceful head, with its soft, dark hair, which I had not seen for four months, and, through the meshes of my wife's veil, I saw two sparkling teardrops.

"She, too, remembers and regrets," I thought; "perhaps she could forgive."

Alas! if we two could but have been alone at that mo-

ment! But close beside her was the pale, stern face of her father and the determined one of her mother; those two had, from the very beginning of the trouble, watched her jealously. I had tried every means of having an interview with Helen, but my letters had been intercepted, my messengers turned away, and our only meeting had been in the presence of a magistrate, an utter stranger, who, with the best intentions, had by his cold formality made matters even worse.

Since that day I have not entered my home. But now, on leaving the mayor's office, I went to the house to pack up my clothes. I knew that I could not live there alone among the memories of my vanished happiness, so I resolved to travel, and thus to fly from all that could remind me of my wife and home. A mutual friend arranged the details of the matter: I was to spend the night in the house, and the next morning Babette, my only child, would be allowed to come and breakfast with me. At three o'clock I was to leave; at four, Helen would come to take away her belongings; and twenty-four hours later the house would be "To Let," a party of workmen would come and put it in order for the next tenant, and then it would be left empty and desolate, an image of my life.

I stopped in the midst of my packing to order a breakfast such as would please my little Babette; I held a consultation with Lucas, my old servant, and we chose those dishes that the child was fond of. I also put aside for her two little trinkets, a pretty *porte-bonheur* and a locket containing my own likeness.

Poor little Babette! She was blessed with the happy ignorance of a child of seven, and yet she was precocious enough to understand, in her own way, that there was something serious the matter between papa and mamma.

At ten o'clock precisely she came, accompanied by my mother-in-law's maid, who said she would return for mademoiselle at two in the afternoon.

Who can say where and how little girls acquire tact?

They must be born with a germ of it, and, when developed, it makes them either women of the world, capable of reading one's secret thoughts, or else gentle, patient nurses for the sick and wounded. Babette asked me no questions, but kissed me rather gravely; sat on my knee before the fire, as was her custom, and, when I gave her the locket, pressed my likeness to her lips, then hung it round her neck, whispering:

"I will kiss it every morning and every night."

When we had finished breakfast, however, she said, abruptly:

"Do you know mamma is coming here at four o'clock?"

"Yes, my dear," I answered.

"Are you not going to wait and say good-by to her?" she asked, and after an instant's hesitation I said:

"I cannot. I have to leave the house at three; the train will not wait for me."

"Why can't you take another train?" she persisted.

"Because—because I have promised to go by that train, and I must not break my word, you know."

Then, forgetting her presence, I added, half aloud: "And yet, if I could but see her alone!"

Babette said nothing more, and while I continued my preparations for going away she wandered all over the silent house collecting her playthings, coming back occasionally with a doll or a little box of treasures, and looking unusually serious.

Her behavior wounded my paternal love, for it seemed as if she were already indifferent to our approaching parting.

All too soon the servant came to take my darling from me, and I needed all my fortitude when we kissed each other for the last time. Never, never should we meet again in our *home!* The time dragged after she had gone; but at last the clock struck three. Then I sent my servant for a carriage, and, while he was gone, I went into the bedroom and stood looking at a beautiful portrait of Helen, painted when she was a young girl. It belonged to her, so that I could not take it with me;

and, as I gazed at it, my tears burst forth and I cried aloud: "Forgive me!"

A slight noise startled me, and, turning round, I saw Helen standing in the doorway, pale and agitated. In an instant I was on my knees before her, pressing her hand to my lips and murmuring:

"You have come an hour too soon—does this mean that you love me still?"

Trembling and tearful, she replied: "You have stayed an hour too long. Why have you done so—what is the use?"

Just then Babette danced into the room, and, clasping her arms around our necks, exclaimed delightedly: "I did it, mamma—I put the clocks back, papa!"

Of what avail are legal papers and magistrates against the power of love's pardon? I went on my journey, but in the company of Helen and Babette, my wife and child.

The readers of this story will agree that the traveller deserved remuneration for his tale, but was scarcely justified in his way of getting it. He should have either become a public lecturer or sold it in manuscript to a syndicate. The facts were contributed to ROMANCE by Nina Fitch.

THE TRAVELLER'S TALE.

"GENTLEMEN," said the stranger, "I swear to you I have been a great traveller."

And truly he must have been; if not that, certainly a close student of geography and realistic fiction.

His stories were but too well told, with a ring of verity, yet fabulous as the tales of the Arabian Nights. Indeed, a rare gift was this learned story-teller's, who had only to twist his tongue to make a toothsome bit of—nothing.

I see him as I write; the sound of his bugle voice rings in my ears, mingled with the sad melody of the moaning pines. For there, in their shrieking midst, we had pitched our tent; and the mountains flung down huge stones; and the wind howled, and the lightning sent jagged streaks to play upon our nerves; while just in the middle of this Hecate's stew-pot, that great heap of foreign seasoning—the traveller. With the head of a Norse god and the speech of the Orient he came among us; first, a hand on our crazy tent-flap; then, his deep eyes shining in the night.

"May the hand of God shield you from the storm, hunters!" came in rich, ringing tones. To which we responded with backwoods big-heartedness:

"Step right up and warm, friend. It's a wild night—have something?" He would. We toasted him right royally, and by the red glare of our camp-fire I could see him well—a man of no ordinary stamp.

Tall and majestic, he held himself with a soldierly bearing that was emphasized by the empty sleeve pinned limply across his breast; his hat was the southern "slouch," the face it shaded one never to be forgotten.

With the stillness and firm outline of sculpture that massive head seemed to my fancy like some noble work of old bronze washed from the mountain-side by the fury of the Walpurgis night. But if the head was bronze, the tongue was a silver one, whose liquid stream fell on enchanted ears. First, the mystery of the lost arm was explained away; a pathetic reminiscence, dealing in Confederate soldier life and Union sympathies.

"Yes, Union sympathies," he repeated; "but, guns! boys—I *de*spised the damned niggers!"

Following on top of this came brilliant sketches, thick as hail, of travel and thrilling adventure.

"Did I but choose, lads," he broke out, suddenly, "I could make the very flesh on your bones creep with the awfulness of a tale I could tell."

Now show me the soul yet that is proof against such a threat. Being no less human than the average lot of two-legged animals, we implored the traveller to make us "creep;" and since he was a man of feeling, he consented. But first came an eternity of silence, the great man lost in thought and note-book, we devouring him with greedy glances; and all the while the fire burned dimly and the rain beat a devil's tattoo against our canvas roof. At last he spoke, and our six hearts leaped into our throats.

"You will see here," began the stranger, holding out his note-book, a bulky and important-looking affair, for general inspection, "that the experience I am about to relate is catalogued under the head of 'Snake-Stories.' It bears the number thirteen — ominous count! — and is no fanciful picture of an idle brain, but a real happening. In fact, I myself was an eye-witness to the scene."

Whereupon, having cleared his throat, he read, rather than told, the following remarkable narrative:

THE SNAKE-CHARMER AND THE WINGED MONSTER.

It was on a roasting August day in the year 1870 that, together with my old army comrade, Colonel Sep-

timus Morgan, I visited Auteuil, a suburb of Paris. For there, as the chief attractions of a huge country fair, were the things that had set all Paris agog—a beautiful snake-charmer and a winged serpent.

Arrived at the fair-grounds, we had no difficulty in finding the wheeled theatre, but the snake-charming performance had already begun. The scene presented was a rude forest one, the two jugglers, a man and a woman, in the centre of the stage. The man, rather a handsome fellow of the brute type, held a great cage, filled with snakes, between his knees; the woman was literally festooned with the writhing reptiles, and—well, somehow, she strangely pleased me.

"You see the newspapers don't yarn," whispered Septimus in my ear; "she's a fair bit of woman-flesh."

I made no answer. My eyes were glued to the woman's face.

She was a slim witch of a creature, wearing the spangles of her trade with the dignity of a princess. Her eyes were as green as twin emeralds. Her little narrow head seemed sister to the others about her. Her very movements, measured and sinuous, suggested these same creeping things; a resemblance made further striking by the choice of a singular head-dress and a peculiarly shaded brown costume.

"Beautiful! beautiful! beautiful!" I heard myself muttering between my teeth. At that instant the snakes dropped to the floor and scrambled into the cage the man held open; then, stepping to the edge of the stage, the fellow announced the next thing on the afternoon's programme—a pantomime illustrating the triumph of virtue over sin. The actors were to be "the great and only Zela" and the winged monster Matia.

Left alone—for the mountebank and his cage disappeared behind a curtain—Zela began to sing a low, weird song that she accompanied by balancing her body, and with rhythmical movements of her arms.

Suddenly, the attention of the people was distracted by a startling sight. From a trap-door in the centre of the stage a head was thrust—a head red as new blood

and with craven human eyes; it was followed by a misshapen body, deeper in tint, and surmounted by two bat-like wings. In a moment the thing was in full view—a species of serpent, about four feet in length and of a heavy build. Wriggling slowly, the monster reached the centre of the stage, then stopped, and for a long moment stared foolishly at the woman; she continued to sing, smiling down into its face.

They went through with their performance clumsily enough: Virtue pressing down Sin with a caressing foot; a bit of cruelty the forgetful dragon responded to by licking her little shoe with a slobbering and loving tongue. In a very short time the pantomime was over.

"Now," said Septimus, "comes the strangest part of the whole performance. The monster charms the man into a sleep that looks like death. They say it's a terrible sight."

"Sh-h-h!" I cautioned, for the fellow had reappeared and was explaining the next act.

"Remember," he was saying, "I will look exactly as if I were dead, but don't be frightened."

"Yes, exactly like death," echoed the woman mechanically, "but don't be afraid."

With fascinated eyes I watched the man seat himself side-face to the audience. The woman placed the snake, snarling and hissing like an angry cat, across a perch facing him.

At first, the fellow's face wore a slight smile that soon changed into a grimace and then into a death's-head leer.

On his part, the monster's humid eyes narrowed to a pale gleam, while his hanging lips spread and shut in a noiseless laugh; in a moment they uncurled and thrust themselves out into a hideous pout. At the end of ten minutes the ever-varying expression of the human countenance was fixed into a frightful mask; eyes ready to burst from the head, the mouth horribly distorted. I turned from the sickening sight to where the ungodly mesmerizer sat.

"Heaven defend us!" I gasped. For even as I looked

the creature swelled, and, instant by instant, grew larger, until its serpent outline was obliterated, and it resembled a bloated toad that had been dipped in blood; over its drowsy eyes hung something dark and filmy—a veil of flesh.

"Satan at the masquerade," laughed a man beside me. "Eh—is it not so?" he asked. I nodded; my throat was too parched to speak. Here the woman stooped over the monster, appearing to whisper a command, and immediately it opened its dripping mouth and spat in the man's face. Then followed a shocking spectacle.

A loud click and the wretch's skeleton jaw dropped, while a swollen and blackened tongue lolled from the yawning mouth. I groaned aloud at the sight, and against my neck I could feel the hot breath of the frightened villagers.

"Come away, Septimus," I screamed; "come away! It is awful! It *is* death—death!"

"No, no," he answered; "this is the every-day thing. Let's see it out."

"No, monsieur," broke in our neighbor again, "it is not always like this. I have been here many times, and I assure you I have never seen the serpent so horrible before."

"Sit down! Silence!" called the people about us.

Zela stood at the edge of the stage and seemed about to speak, the smile of an angel imprinted on her lovely face. She pointed to the horrid thing beside her.

"Have we not kept our promise, friends?" she asked. "Is not this, indeed, a picture of death?"

As if this sinister word was the signal that its work was done, like an over-gorged leech, the monster turned and fell stupidly to the floor.

"That flesh looks ready for the worms," went on the woman, dreamily. "It seems scarcely possible that but a moment ago it was bursting with life—that only yesterday this clay was the false lover of a wretched woman. He will be false no more," she added in a still, odd way. Then catching up her devilish ally,

she pressed her cheek to its leprous jaws, her voice rising shrill and screaming:

"Send for the police—quick, bind us!" she cried. "Matia and I have killed him!"

. . . . . .

With the last word of his strange story the traveller's voice died away to a hoarse whisper, while great beads of sweat stood out on his dark forehead.

"It was a terrible experience," he said, huskily, "to sit there and see a man killed under my very eyes."

He sat for a moment with his face working convulsively, then added:

"If you will excuse me, boys, I will say no more on this subject. I should like to forget it."

And though we fairly ached to know the sequel of his tale of horror, we forbore questioning him.

That night the stillness of our camp was broken by troubled sighs; with sleep, came phantom rehearsals of the traveller's bloody play.

From time to time I awoke with a start and looked at him as he lay snoring with the calm of an untroubled conscience, while my weary body seemed possessed with the spirit of unrest. At last, I slept—an unhappy sleep. In the midst of my nightmare I seemed to hear a voice calling me with frantic cries.

"Cap'n! Cap'n!" it said.

"Yes, Joe," I answered. And I opened my eyes, to discover the usually good-natured face of our handsome guide now swollen and purple with suppressed wrath.

"Cap'n," he shouted, "thar be nuther a watch nur a wallet in this hyar camp!"

A terrible suspicion took possession of me; but no, it was preposterous. Feeling myself the blackest of villains, I whispered, falteringly:

"The stranger?"

"Skeedaddled! Jes ter think," wailed the wretched Joe, "every red cent stole—an' six watches ter boot! An' *him* even a-stuffin' that 'ere derned Septimus down our th'oats!"

The history of "doubles," from that which Dr. Hale so cleverly invented down to Dr. Jekyll's and to the "astral body" which is so amusingly described in the following story, is one of disastrous failure. The young Oxford student whose woes were related in the *St. James Budget* readily concluded to follow the great poet's rule, "My own right hand my cup-bearer shall be."

MY ASTRAL BODY.

"THERE's no doubt at all about it," said the rajah, relighting his cigar. "It's perfectly easy if you know how to do it. The scepticism of the West is nothing less than disgusting."

The rajah had come to Oxford to complete his education and endue himself with the culture of Europe; and he sat in my rooms, in a frock coat of perfect cut (he always wore a frock coat), smoking one of my weeds and drinking a whiskey-and-soda. The rajah took to European culture with avidity, and I have very little doubt that he learned many new things with which it might or might not be expedient to acquaint his fellow-countrymen and subjects when he returned to India. But all the intellectual interests of Oxford were not strong enough to wean him from his love for the ancient lore of his own country, and he was always ready to expound the hidden wisdom of the East to any inquiring spirit. As soon as I found this out, I cultivated his acquaintance sedulously; for, in common with all intelligent men of the present day, I took a keen interest in that strange learning which seemed to give its possessors such extraordinary powers.

"Can you do it?" I asked.

"I should hope so," said the rajah, contemptuously. "If I couldn't do that I'd turn Mahommedan."

"I wish you'd teach me."

The rajah took in a deep puff of smoke. "You're sure you could manage it?" he asked.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Well, of course, like anything else, an astral body must be treated with tact or it gets out of hand."

"Does it?"

"Why, yes; you must first be firm and yet kind. Don't let it take liberties, or you don't know where it will land you. I rather doubt if I ought to show you."

I implored him to do so. I was young, rash, self-confident, and I thought I could manage an astral body as easily as I did the dean.

"Don't blame me if you find it too much for you, that's all," said the rajah. "And of course you must promise not to tell any one."

"Oh, must I?"

"Yes, you must; because it's quite irregular in me to show you like this. You ought by rights, you know, to go to Thibet for seven years."

"That would be rather a bore."

"Beastly," said the rajah; "but of course they insist on it, because they get the fees."

He swore me to secrecy by all manner of oaths, and lastly on my word as a gentleman; and then he showed me. I practised all that evening, and was tolerably proficient by the time the rajah knocked out his last pipe and went off to bed. I must not tell how it is done, as I promised not to; besides, if any one reads this narrative through, he will never want to know.

At first it was very convenient. I always used to project it to chapel instead of going myself. It did capitally there, because it had only to behave itself and hold its tongue. At lectures it was a failure; it was such an inattentive beggar that its notes were worth nothing. On the whole, however, I was very well satisfied with it, and came to rely upon it more and more for all the unpleasant duties of life.

"Well, how do you like it?" asked the rajah one day.

"My dear fellow, it's splendid," I answered. "It's up in town, being measured for trousers, now. You can't think how much trouble it saves."

The rajah smiled and shook his head.

"Be moderate," he said. "You mustn't use it too much, or it'll presume on it."

"Will it? What will it do?"

"Why, if it's always being projected, it's as likely as not it'll learn the trick of it and take to projecting itself. Then you'll be left in the lurch."

"What shall I do then?"

"I don't see what you can do," said the rajah, scratching his head. "Of course, I should merely report it at headquarters; but you can't, because you've no business with it at all."

"Well, I shan't grudge it a holiday now and then," I said, magnanimously.

The rajah was right. It did begin to take French leave. Several times when I wanted it I found it had, without a word of apology, projected itself off to Iffley or somewhere, and was not available. I spoke very severely to it. It said nothing, but listened with an unpleasant sort of smile. "We all have our duties," I remarked, "and yours is to be here"—and I pointed to my chest—"when you are wanted. You're as bad as a scout."

"I ought to have a little relaxation," it answered, sulkily.

"I never heard of such a thing in connection with you. Isn't it enough for you to meditate in four dimensions when you're not at work? That would satisfy most people."

"It's all very well in Thibet," it grumbled; "but a fellow doesn't come to Oxford to do that."

"One would think you had nothing to do with me. You seem to forget that you are simply a projection of mine."

We had some high words and parted—I mean, united—in very bad temper with one another. It was in the middle of a most impertinent and positively threatening speech, when I terminated the interview by resuming it. It was very unreasonable and irritating, and I made up my mind to ask the rajah to speak to it the next

morning. I had an engagement that evening or I would have done it then. How I wish I had!

At 9:30 I went to an "at home" at Professor Drayton's. As a rule, "at homes" are dull; but I had a reason for going to this one. The professor had a very pretty daughter, and I was vain enough to think that my presence was welcome to her. In fact, we were great friends, and I had not been at the house a quarter of an hour before I had forgotten all my worries with my unruly astral body, and was sitting by Bessie in the small drawing-room, enjoying myself immensely. Suddenly—mysteriously—I felt something like a violent push. Bessie vanished; the drawing-room vanished; and I found myself in the High, standing in the dripping rain without a hat or coat. I stood still, in bewilderment. What had happened? A moment later the proctor was upon me. I gave my name and college in a mechanical way, and he passed on, leaving me still standing in the rain. What had happened? Then it flashed across my mind. I understood its threats. It had projected me!

I woke up next morning determined to have it out with it. I found, as I expected, that it had waited till I was asleep; then it slunk in and united without my knowing it. I went and paid my fine, and then, not waiting to breakfast, I proceeded to project it. It wouldn't move! I tried again and again I had no more power over it than a child. I knew it was there, but I could not move it an inch. In wrath I jumped up, seized my cap, and started for the rajah's rooms. The rogue saw what I was up to. I give you my word I had not reached the door when it projected me most viciously, and I landed down in the parks.

I was not to be beaten. I came back to college at a run, and made straight for the rajah's rooms. It was on the lookout for me. As I ran by my oak, which I had to pass, it rushed out on me, united, and projected me back again to Magdalen bridge. This happened three times. Then I sat down in the parks, just where I dropped, and acknowledged to myself that I was in

a pretty fix. I had a fearful week of it. Of course, wherever I was it could unite at once by just thinking of me; and, directly it had united, it used, I believe, out of pure malice, to project me somewhere where I did not want to go. It was lucky for me that it was new to the business; its powers were as yet very undeveloped, and consequently it did not carry very far. If it could I am sure it would have sent me to Kamchatka; but as it was, I never went further than the university boat-house—a pretty tidy step on a bad morning. Still it was improving, and I felt that I must act at once, if I did not want to be a permanent wanderer on the face of the earth.

My only chance was to engross its attention in some way, so that it would forget me for a little while and leave me free to speak to the rajah. I pinned all my hopes on the rajah. Well, one morning, a week after it first projected me, I went for a walk in Christchurch meadow. We were united, and it had actually left me in peace ever since breakfast. I hoped its better feelings were beginning to get the mastery of it, and, in order to see, I tried to project it. No, it wouldn't move! The creature was still recalcitrant.

Suddenly I saw Bessie Drayton just in front of me. In delight at seeing her I forgot about it, and, quickening my pace, overtook her and lifted my hat. She smiled divinely, saying: "Why, Mr. Nares, I was just going to write——" At that moment, when I was listening to her sweet voice, it projected me! Could illnature go further? But luckily its mind was not really concentrated on what it was doing. I believe it was thinking of Bessie, and consequently it only carried about a hundred yards. I landed behind one of the big elms, where I lay perdu till it had gone by. It and Bessie passed me together, and it was grinning from ear to ear and looking as pleased as Punch. And poor Bessie—she thought she was talking to me—was being most charming to it.

I did not waste time in swearing. I ran like the wind back to college, hoping that Bessie's society would

prevent its coming after me till I had spoken to the rajah. I still retained one pull over it. In order to unite it had to come to where I was; it could not resume me from a distance, as I used to resume it; so if it united now it would have to leave Bessie.

By a blessed chance the rajah was at home, and in trembling haste I poured my story into his ears. He burst out laughing.

"I was afraid of it!" he gasped, holding his sides. "How splendid!"

I restrained my annoyance, and after a time he became a little grave.

"Do help me!" I urged. "It may unite at any moment and project me the deuce knows where."

"Oh, it'll be all right with the young lady."

"Not for long. She's very particular, and won't let it walk far with her."

"Oh, then we must act. You don't feel it yet?"

"No; but do be quick!"

The rajah sported his oak, took off his coat, lay down on the floor, and went into strong convulsions. I regretted putting him to so much trouble; but my need was urgent, and I knew that he was a good-natured man. Presently he cried (and I was just getting alarmed about him):

"Are you there, Nani-Tal?"

"Certainly," said an old white-haired gentleman, dressed in a sheet, who sat in the rajah's arm-chair.

"That's all right," said the rajah, getting up and putting on his coat. "You were very difficult."

"We're so busy just now," said Nani-Tal, apologetically. "I'm demonstrating three nights a week, and the preparations take all my time."

"Well, you can't have a boom for nothing," said the rajah, smiling.

"I don't complain," said Nani-Tal; "I only mentioned it to excuse myself for keeping you waiting. I was in New York when you began materializing. It's a lively city."

"You must tell him all about it," said the rajah to me; "he won't be very hard on us."

Nani-Tal was, however, rather severe. He said it was too bad of the rajah. How were they to live if that sort of thing went on? Then he turned to me and added: "Of course you couldn't manage it. If you'd gone through the course, you would have been all right. But there; it's everything for nothing nowadays."

"My friend couldn't go to Thibet."

"He might have paid the fees, anyhow," grumbled Nani-Tal, "and taken correspondence lessons."

We soothed him down with the promise of a handsome donation present, and at last he consented to help us. It was only just in time, for at that very moment I found my astral body uniting. A second later it made a violent effort o project me; of course it saw Nani-Tal and knew it was in for it. The old gentleman was too quick for it.

"Come out of that!" he cried, imperiously, and the wretch stood in the middle of the room.

It did my heart good to hear Nani-Tal fall on the creature. After giving it no end of a lecture he concluded: "And now, young man, you'll just go back to your jackal for a thousand years and learn better manners."

The wretch protested; it asked for an elephant, or even a tiger. Nani-Tal was obdurate.

"A jackal will just suit you," he said. "Be off!"

The creature vanished. Simultaneously Nani-Tal began to disintegrate.

"Wait a bit !" cried the rajah.

"I can't. I'm summoned to St. James' Hall. There is a large audience, and the professor has been in convulsions seven minutes."

I tried to grasp his hand in thanks.

"If you want another," he said, "you must go through the course—the full course. There's no other way. Let this be a lesson to you."

And, with this parting remark, he disintegrated.

The rajah lit a cigar, and I, lighter at heart than I had been for many days, followed his example.

"It was wrong of me," said the rajah; "I won't do it again."

"It's a pity it turned out so badly," I remarked; "it was quite a comfort at first."

"They're all like that unless you keep a tight hand on them. Shall you take the course?"

"Not I. I've had enough of it."

"Perhaps you're right. Excuse me; I have to go to the Deccan on business."

He fell back on the sofa, apparently in a trance, and I went off to the dean's lecture. It makes all the difference whether you know how to do a thing or not.

The society which gives its name to this story was a species of Italian vigilantes, whose methods in the promotion of justice may be commended to similar societies in the far West, and also to the lovers of good jokes. It originally appeared in *Putnam's Magazine*, and is republished by permission in ROMANCE.

THE MEZZO-MATTI.

"GOOD-MORNING to you, Beppo. I have come after my shoes," cried a voice, in the happiest of tones, outside the lattice.

"Your shoes?" answered the cobbler, from inside, with a mingled expression of anger and amazement, as he hammered away at his work.

"Why, yes, certainly, I want my shoes; are they not finished?"

"Not even on the lasts," replied Beppo, in the most indifferent of tones.

"Oh! say you are joking. For heaven's sake do not play upon my feelings! Not finished? Why, I ordered them ten days ago, and I had your most solemn promise—which the saints have recorded—that they should be ready to-day at noon. Alas! Alas! What shall I do? I cannot go to church with Idiletta without my shoes; and to-day, at noon precisely, I am to be married!"

"I cannot help that, Tito, my prince of bridegrooms. Put off your wedding; you and your Idiletta can wait a spell."

"But just consider, Beppo—the marriage guests are invited, the macaroni is already on the boil, and I must have those shoes."

"Now," thought Beppo, "I have long had a grudge against this Tito; his shoes are almost ready, and maybe I may get a carlin more for them by holding them back;" and, not answering a word, he went on with his work.

"Look, now," said Tito, and he unbound the scarf

that encircled his waist, "here are the ten carlins for them." Beppo leaned his head out of the lattice, and saw a gold ducat among the silver pieces. His cupidity was instantly aroused. Tito went on: "I am a richer man than I was yesterday, and I have no objection to add a carlin more, just for the pleasure of seeing my new buckles on them."

"A richer man! So I see, Tito. Eleven carlins is not half what they are worth."

"Beppo, listen: in addition, when the fruit season comes, you shall have a basket of melons, and just as many figs as you can carry; and as to mulberries, why——"

"Goodness gracious, how you promise!" interrupted the cobbler, with a smile of derision. "Whose garden is to suffer, or has Tito, the vagabond, become governor of the province?"

"Most skilful and greatest of shoemakers, I have had a stroke of good fortune; the biggest prize in the lottery is nothing to my luck. Just listen to me. I, Tito, am going to be a man pretty well-to-do in the world. My mother—as all the village knows—when I was an infant went to Naples, and there became nurse in a noble family. Last night, as I was deeply immersed in thought, calculating whether I could afford cheese with my to-day's macaroni, a great lackey, all bedecked with gold, calls me by name, and says his master anxiously awaits my coming at the hotel, and begs me to follow him. I was dumb with surprise, but in I went. In the handsomest room in the house I found a host of gentlemen, all equipped for the chase; and one of them, nobler and finer than the rest, with a royal decoration in his button-hole, suddenly rises, seizes me around the neck, and introduces me to the company as his foster-brother. He asks questions about me and my poor mother, and shed tears when he heard of her death, and, giving me a piece of gold, bade me have masses said for the repose of her soul. I told him that I was going to be married, and that Idiletta was the dearest, prettiest, sweetest——"

"Exactly, you ass! just so," savagely interrupted Beppo. "Was there ever such a born fool! I suppose you would like this troop of huntsmen to give your Idiletta the chase. These Neapolitans are famous hunts-men——" and here Beppo maliciously gave quite an artistic representation of the cries of a woman, with the hulloa and noise of the hunt in the distance.

"Out on you, Beppo, for a foul-mouthed cobbler!" roared Tito, in a rage. "Why, you wicked creature, they have purposely postponed their hunt to-day, in order to witness my marriage."

"Umph!" enviously replied Beppo, jerking his shoulders on a level with his ears. "And so ended the affair?"

"No," joyfully sang out Tito, slinging his cap up in the air. "My foster-brother, besides a handful of gold, gave me a broad slice of land, just over the hill there. Hurra! viva! I shall grow my own figs and melons, and won't I build me a house, and have a long-eared donkey, blessed be all the saints! And now," here Tito held up for want of breath, "nothing is wanting to complete my happiness but those shoes; but if I do not have them in an hour," here, with true Italian versatility of character, Tito's voice and face were plunged in the deepest abyss of melancholy, "I shall be the most wretched of men."

Beppo was silent, and thus he mused: "Twenty minutes will finish Tito's shoes. This foster-brother has so overwhelmed this beggar, Tito, with joy, that the little wit the dog had has all left him. He is going to have a donkey and a wife! This rascally Tito is to be raised to the very tip-top of happiness—is he? Well, he must afford to pay for his marriage shoes. This cursed foster-brother has done all this for Tito. Now, I, Beppo, am nothing more than a poor cobbler, and can by no means pretend to have the power of this foster-brother—oh, no! not in the least—but still, if in my small way I, Beppo, can do anything to make him miserable, I, too, will have shown some power, though of rather a different sort. A basket of figs and a car-

lin more! the mean rascal! Let him say ten carlins more, five baskets of figs, and perhaps I will let him have them; for I have him at my mercy now."

"Well, Beppo, answer quickly," gasped out Tito, as if life or death were at stake.

"You may, perhaps, have them to-day; they are commenced, and I might, perhaps, finish them, provided I was properly paid for them. I am overrun with business. I am now mending Padre Alessandrino's shoes."

"Why, Padre Alessandrino is to marry us."

"Exactly. Now, if I should work at your shoes, the good padre's would not be finished, and the church," here the hypocrite crossed himself, "the blessed church calls for first obedience. Now, Tito, would you have his holiness go to mass with his toe out or his heel run down? Would you, sacrilegious dog?"

Here was a quandary for Tito, and there was logic in it.

"But," added Beppo, "if you will give me ten carlins more and ten baskets of figs, why then, perhaps——"

"I cannot afford it. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Wear your old ones," tauntingly said Beppo.

"Why poke fun at me? You know I have gone barefoot ever since I was born!"

"Cannot help that, signor landholder: if you have gone so long in natural silk stockings, hop about so a trifle longer. My terms are ten carlins more, and in a half-hour I shall ask twenty; so make up your mind, and if you have nothing better to offer, the sooner you get out of my sunlight the better;" and with this Beppo closed the lattice with a slam, through which Tito's handsome face had been peering like a Titian in a rustic frame. Tito's steps were heard slowly moving away, and Beppo resumed his hammer and in an audible tone thus talked to himself:

"Curse his luck! why should this Tito swim in a sea of gold? This Idiletta! who does she take me for, to turn up her nose at Beppo and jump at Tito? It is true, I never demeaned myself by asking her to have me She is comely, but not a copper in the world. I do not

care about her, though she might have waited, if only through politeness, to see what my intentions were, and whether I had made a choice. To the evil one with my trade! If I could only leave a sharp nail in the heel of every shoe I cobbled, how I would glory in it; it is a satisfaction, however, to know that the leather I put in them is not worth a straw. Tito will give me no more? We shall see. The sun has already passed my window, and it must be noon, and Tito will have to make a higher bid—fifteen carlins more at the very lowest—he can afford it. Even suppose they do not get married to-day, they will have to-morrow or the next day, and this time a year hence they will not perceive it; for may I be hanged if he gets his shoes to-day without well paying for them."

Just then a supplicating knock was heard at the window. "Ah," said Beppo, never budging, "I thought as much, he will pay for them; let him knock again."

"Beppo, it is Tito; open! open!" Beppo, with feigned amazement, opened the window, and there stood Tito, the picture of despondency. "In the name of all the saints, my shoes!" he said.

"I told you an hour ago that you must pay for them. I want fifteen carlins now."

"Let me implore you."

"Fifteen carlins!"

"I can give nothing more."

"Well, then, off with you."

"But you promised me the shoes!"

"I do not care a wax-end if I did; circumstances alter cases. He! he! Wear one of your Idiletta's, her feet are big enough; for she probably will stand in yours, besides wearing something else, which I am too polite to mention."

"I am not to have the shoes, then?"

"No; if you want them to-day at noon, and it wants just twenty minutes of it, I must be paid a carlin the minute. Perhaps somebody else in the village will make 'em in time." Beppo relied on being the only shoemaker in the place.

"Mother of mercies, what shall I do—o—o!" blubbered Tito, in a paroxysm of grief.

"Stop your bellowing, you sucking calf, and hand over the money, or do without them."

"Well, then," suddenly answered Tito, with a smile, and as cool as an iced lemonade, "I will not want them at all, not even for a gift."

"Diavolo!" said Beppo, between his teeth. "Well, do without them; they shall shoe your betters."

"I have not the least doubt of it," added Tito very quietly, as he drew from under his jacket a pair of dancing pumps, on which sparkled the biggest possible kind of buckles. "See, look, Beppo, how these fit!" and he put one on; "they fit like the skin to a grape, and you could not make such to save your soul. Now addio, addio—I bear no malice. Come to the wedding and welcome—we are going to have such a dance—here is a new step in the tarentella," and here Tito cut a pigeon-wing, one foot bare and the other elegantly shod. "By the way, just think of it; we spend to-morrow at Naples, the first day of the honeymoon—won't we go into the Ravioli, lighten the wine-flask, and see Polichinello! I am mad with joy—addio! addio!" and away he bounded like a deer.

Beppo stood stock-still. He was improvising a chaste Neapolitan oath. Presently, having duly considered the subject, he let it out ——— ———. It was something individual, yet generic; microscopic, yet Cyclopean; diffused, yet searching; generally sending all people, animals included, to the infernal regions, and Tito most particularly.

"This foster-brother has given him a pair of his cast-off slippers; may they give him the gout———" Here he brought down his hammer on his thumb with an awful whack, and, with another curse, threw it from him. The implement described a summersault or so, pitched into the middle of his water vase, shivering it to pieces, and then, with a ricochet, went smashing through the lattice. "To Satan with my luck! They are going to Naples, Tito and Idiletta, are they? May

Vesuvius spit lava on them! By the holy St. Crispin, I will go there, too—yes, with his very shoes, and just for spite I'll work at them this very minute, not that the padre's (I sincerely pray that some one may just want the padre for the last sacrament about their wedding time) are finished," and saying this, he went to work, and presently Tito's shoes were done.

Beppo's surmise about Tito's shoes was correct. Tito, chagrined at the idea of being married without shoes, had sought his patron, who instantly presented him with a pair of his own.

Tito told the story of his distress and the cupidity of the cobbler with inimitable skill. His story was listened to by all the gentlemen with exceeding gravity. Now it happened that Tito's patron was president, and the rest of the company members, of a celebrated club that then existed in Naples, and what they did will form the subject of the next chapter.

II.

By sunrise next morning, Beppo took his shoes, tied the thongs together, slung them over his stick, and trudged away toward Naples.

The village was just getting hid behind a vine-clad hill, when past flew the happy Tito with the blushing Idiletta in a *curricolo*, racing away as fast as the horse could tear. They lovingly kissed their hands to him, threw him a flower and in a moment were lost in a cloud of dust.

"Maladetta!" howled out Beppo after them, as he ground the flower in the dust. "May the axle-tree split, and may you break your necks in the ditch! No matter, it is but ten miles to Naples and I shall get there as soon as they. Curse them, who are they that they should ride when their betters walk? In Naples I shall sell these shoes and, let me see, I will have a polenta and a flask of Capri."

"Hulloa!" sang out a laborer, engaged in making a ditch by the roadside. "I say, my young man, who are those two pretty people driving past so pleasantly?"

"Who? A stupid fellow, with his wife, and she, be-

tween you and me, is no better than she should be—may they be jolted to jelly."

"Ah?" said the man, digging away.

"Yes," added Beppo, his mouth full of venom, "she is a slattern—a loose creature—but a proper match for a thief like her husband."

"Well, appearances are deceptive; one never can tell what people really are. Now, you," went on to say the laborer, as he rested on his spade, "look like a shoemaker, though, from what is hanging from your stick there, one might think——"

"What?" inquired Beppo.

"Why, you see, if you take my advice, you won't expose yourself in that way; the game laws, you know, are very strict——"

"What, under heavens, are you driving at?"

"Why, you see," said the man, with a cunning look, "a pair of birds like those, I know, are tempting. What elegant fellows!—only take care the game-keepers don't ask you where you got them."

"You are mad!" cried Beppo, giving him a look of disdain, as he marched along, with his shoes dangling from his stick.

On he went a mile, until he met a man leading an ass, who bore huge baskets full of chickens and turkeys. With a loud "whoa!" the man stopped the beast, and thus accosted the astonished Beppo:

"I say, friend, have you a mind to sell those birds there? I'll give you the pick of a turkey or a pair of fat chickens for them. You are a lucky fellow to have the first of the season; take 'em to the palace, and offer them to the cook of the palace, and you will get your own price for them—they always buy the first birds. If I was going to Naples, I should not mind giving you forty carlins for that pair. Success to you," and, with this, jerking the ass, he went on his way.

Stock-still stood Beppo in amazement, his mouth wide open. "Strange!—wonderful! To meet two crazy people, one after the other, what can it portend? Oh, St. Jeromio keep the evil eye from me!"

On he went, until the road descended to the bottom of a pleasant valley. At the base of the hill, Beppo saw a travelling carriage, which two stout horses were slowly dragging up the hill. As they came leisurely by, Beppo saw two gentlemen inside, and when they were almost opposite, he heard one of them say to the other, "There now, talk to me about your bustards or your mallards, nonsense! There is a pair of pheasants worth more than all the beccaficos and ortolans in the world. Give me one of those well larded, and basted with oil, and done brown to a turn, and I declare it to be a morsel fit for a king. Hulloa! Postilion, stop your horses! Young man, what do you want for those pheasants?"

Beppo heard no more, but, taking to his heels, ran down the hill as if the devil was after him; a big stone caught his foot, and he rolled on the ground. "Sangre de dio!" roared the cobbler, looking around, as he gave a sidelong glance at his shoes. "Can I be bewitched, or am I drunk? Everybody calls my shoes pheasants! Am I sunstruck?" Here he paused, rubbed his eyes, and gazed affrighted at his shoes. "It is impossible, and yet everybody says so!" He bathed his head in the running brook, and recovering from his bruises, went slowly along, but by no means comfortably. A latent, unaccountable uneasiness had hold of him. Gradually his pace slackened, his knees trembled, and great drops of perspiration streamed down his face. "Pheasants!" he exclaimed; "are they pheasants? Am I Beppo, or somebody else?" He looked anxiously around for some one to testify to his identity. "St. Jeromio help me—I wear your medal round my neck!" and he felt for it in his breast. It was there, and he mechanically repeated an *Ave*, looking cautiously all about him. He started. A hundred feet further on, under an olive-tree, lay a little child, sound asleep. He walked thoughtfully toward it, his *Ave* half finished. Suddenly, with one of those strange mental efforts, his mind was made up—the child must determine the subject. With a cross face and flashing eye, he sprang at

the child, gave it a brutal shake, and, holding in one hand the shoes, and in the other his uplifted stick, he roared out—"You beggarly little imp, what are these? Tell me truly, or I will break every bone in your body."

The child rubbed its sleepy eyes—then shouted, without a moment's hesitation, "Pheasants! pheasants!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Beppo, "is the saying true, that children and fools speak the truth?" and instantly, from a state of suspense, he sprang, at one bound, to the certainty that his shoes were pheasants.

"They are pheasants—rather of the black breed, but pheasants they must be."

"Of course they are," cried the child. "I set traps, and nets, and bird-lime for them, and a finer pair of birds I never saw."

"What are they worth?"

"Seventy-five carlins to the poorest country huckster, and in Naples he could sell them at double that price."

"You are a clever little fellow," sweetly replied Beppo; "and now, little dear, go on with your nap. Viva!" exultingly cried the cobbler, as he took the high road. "Luck has come to more people than to Tito. There must be some saint who has taken me under his special protection. Here am I, possessor of an elegant pair of pheasants (how I can't exactly say), worth one hundred and fifty carlins, at the lowest estimation."

Just then a setter-dog bounded across the road, and a sportsman emerged from a neighboring thicket.

"Here, Fido! here," cried the hunter, and in ran the dog. "Down charge," said the master, and the animal crouched at his feet. "I say, countryman, where on earth did you get those golden pheasants? What a brace! Here have I been beating this cover ever since sunrise, and without a single shot. I hate to go home with an empty gamebag, and if you have a mind to sell, say the word. Will two hundred carlins buy them?"

"No," answered Beppo, "I have been offered two hundred and fifty for them."

"Well, they are dirt cheap at that; at Naples you may get twice that for them. What a brace of birds—what splendid tails!" and here he stroked down the shoes; his dog commenced a series of eccentric jumps at them. "Look, now, at that dog; there is a nose for you; knows them right off. Well, good-day to you; I am sorry I have not money enough about me to buy them; good-by; I wish you luck!" and away went hunter and dog.

"Per Bacco! who does this fellow take me for, with his offer; my birds are not for such poor mouths as his. Strange how the dog knew them. Why shouldn't he? it is his nature. Zounds! how heavy they are! but thank gracious, there is Naples, and in five minutes I shall be in the market-place." With this he hurried on, never heeding a priest, a soldier, and a water-carrier, who all stopped and admired his golden pheasants.

He soon was in the suburbs, elbowing his way through the motley crowd, but was somewhat surprised that no one took any notice of his precious game. "Ah," said he, "these poor devils don't know a golden pheasant from a goose; wait until I get on the plaza." Passing through a narrow street, Beppo heard the sound of a tambourine, and a merry laugh chiming to it. Presently two people, arm-in-arm, leaned over the balcony, and kissed their hands to him; it was Tito and Idiletta.

"Come up, come up," cried Tito; "this is the place; we are just going to have a dance."

"To the evil one with you," answered Beppo, "crow of a Tito and cat of an Idiletta. I suppose you are the only ones who can enjoy themselves in Naples. See! look! I have here," and he shook his stick, with the shoes dangling on them, "what will let me buy you and your Idiletta."

"They are only a pair of——" Here the speech was interrupted by Tito's pretty wife, who, giving him a loud kiss, playfully pulled him in at the window.

Beppo got to the grand plaza, which was thronged, for

it was market-day. He looked around for a place, and spying an empty spot between a fish-woman and a vegetable vender, insinuated himself into the vacant space. Taking the shoes from off his stick, and carefully blowing off the dust from them, he exposed them to view. No one as much as took notice of him; he was slightly disappointed; so, crowding before his two neighbors, he commenced yelling at the top of his voice, "Pheasants —golden pheasants! Who will buy? who wants 'em?"

"Stop your noise!" growled the fish-woman.

"Stop my noise? I had better stop my nose, for your fish smell most confoundedly. Pheasants! pheasants!"

"I say, you fool, what on earth are you howling? Where do you see any pheasants?" inquired the cabbage-seller.

"Pheasants!" roared out Beppo, not heeding her.

Some boys came up who stared in amazement at Beppo, holding his shoes high over their heads. "Pepe! Pepe! a lark! a man with an old pair of shoes, who says they are pheasants. I say, Aunty Cabbage, is not he——" and here the urchin made that particular Italian sign, which consists in touching the forehead with the forefinger, and giving the hand a wag or so, which is the Neapolitan for crazy.

"Pheasants! golden, golden!" kept on Beppo.

"Shoes! an old pair of shoes!" interposed the cabbage-woman. "Zerlina, that man is a lunatic."

"You lie, you scorpion! it is you who are mad," retorted Beppo.

"Liar yourself!" responded Zerlina, throwing a slice of tunny-fish at him.

"A fight! a row! a crazy man!" sang out the assembled crowd. Somebody threw a rotten melon, and a bombardment of spoiled vegetables followed. Beppo, foaming with rage, laid about him with his stick; the two women closed with him, and in a twinkling he was soused in the fountain.

"Police! police!" cried the crowd; "a crazy man, just broken loose from the mad-house! help! murder! down with him!"

Poor Beppo was in the water; every time his head appeared, as quickly was it pushed under again. Up came the sbirri. "What does all this mean, you blackguard, kicking up a fuss in the market-place? This is no place to sell shoes!" and the police pulled the cobbler out of the water by the ears.

"I was selling my pheasants," cried Beppo—his mouth full of slime—not a bit cooled by the immersion.

"Signor policeman, he is mad—crazy as a hare," cried the women.

"Off with him!" yelled the people. Beppo was kicked and pommelled by every one who could get a chance at him, and at last, more dead than alive, was lugged to the guard-house.

. . . . . .

That night his head was shaved, and he was copiously bled. Next morning, the head magistrate was on the point of sending him to the mad-house, when in the nick of time came a note to the committing magistrate, which read as follows:

EXCELLENZA, ETC., ETC., ETC.:

The club of which you were once a most useful member send you the following, which please notice. Beppo, the shoemaker, broke his word with his customer, through envy and jealousy, at the same time with the desire of extorting money from him. The club, happening to hear of the circumstance, determined to punish Beppo, and so arranged it that every one from Beppo's village to Naples swore his shoes were pheasants, and Beppo believed them. We regret that Beppo was a greater fool than we took him for. Enclosed please find ten carlins, which present to Beppo on our part, as the original price for his shoes.

We are, Excellenza,
With much respect,
THE MEZZO-MATTI.

Beppo was sent home, a wiser man. His disposition was much sweetened, though the villagers declared that for a long time he was quite shaken as to his understanding.

This curious illustration of the pathological power of the imagination, which could be paralleled in the diaries of many physicians, is from the Hungarian of Moritz Jokai.

THE BUNDLE OF LETTERS.

One of the celebrated medical practitioners of Pesth, Dr. K——, was one morning, at an early hour, obliged to receive a very pressing visitor. The man, who was waiting in the ante-room, sent in word by the footman that any delay would be dangerous to him; he had, therefore, to be received immediately.

The doctor hastily wrapped a dressing-gown about him, and directed the patient to be admitted to him.

He found himself in the presence of a man who was a complete stranger to him, but who appeared to belong to the best society, judging from his manners. On his pale face could be discerned traces of great suffering. He carried his right hand in a sling, and, though he tried to restrain himself, he now and then could not prevent a stifled sigh escaping from his lips.

"You are Dr. K——?" he asked, in a low and feeble tone of voice.

"That is my name, sir."

"Living in the country, I have not the honor of knowing you, except by reputation. But I cannot say that I am delighted to make your acquaintance, because my visit to you is not a very agreeable one."

Seeing that the sufferer's legs were hardly able to sustain him, the doctor invited him to be seated.

"I am fatigued. It is a week since I had any sleep. Something is the matter with my right hand; I don't know what it is—whether it is a carbuncle or cancer. At first the pain was slight, but now it is a continuous horrible burning, increasing from day to day. I could bear it no longer, so threw myself into my carriage and came to you, to beg you to cut out the affected spot, for an hour more of this torture will drive me mad."

The doctor tried to reassure him, by saying that he might be able to cure the pain with solvents and ointments, without resorting to the use of the bistoury.

"No, no, sir!" cried the patient; "no plasters or ointments can give me any relief. I must have the knife. I have come to you to cut out the place which causes me so much suffering."

The doctor asked to see the hand, which the patient held out to him, grinding his teeth, so insufferable appeared to be the pain he was enduring, and with all imaginable precaution he unwound the bandages in which it was enveloped.

"Above all, doctor, I beg of you not to hesitate on account of anything you may see. My disorder is so strange, that you will be surprised; but do not let that weigh with you."

Dr. K—— reassured the stranger. As a doctor in practice he was accustomed to strange sights, and there was nothing that could surprise him.

What he saw when the hand was freed from its bandages stupefied him, nevertheless. Nothing abnormal was to be seen in it—neither wound nor graze; it was a hand like any other. Bewildered, he let it fall from his own.

A cry of pain escaped from the stranger, who raised the afflicted member with his left hand, showing the doctor that he had not come with the intention of mystifying him, and that he was really suffering.

"Where is the sensitive spot?"

"Here, sir," said the stranger, indicating on the back of his hand a point where two large veins crossed, his whole frame trembling when the doctor lightly touched it with the tip of his finger.

"It is here that the burning pain makes itself felt?"

"Abominably!"

"Do you feel the pressure when I place my finger on it?"

The man made no reply, but his eyes filled with tears, so acute was his suffering.

"It is surprising! I can see nothing at that place."

"Nor can I; yet what I feel there is so terrible that at times I am almost driven to dash my head against the wall."

The doctor examined the spot with a magnifying-glass, then shook his head.

"The skin is full of life; the blood within it circulates regularly; there is neither inflammation nor cancer under it; it is as healthy at that spot as elsewhere."

"Yet I think it is a little redder there."

"Where?"

The stranger took a pencil from his pocket-book and traced on his hand a ring about the size of a sixpenny-piece, and said:

"It is there."

The doctor looked in his face; he was beginning to believe that his patient's mind was unhinged.

"Remain here," he said, "and in a few days I'll cure you."

"I cannot wait. Don't think that I am a madman, a maniac; it is not in that way that you would cure me. The little circle which I have marked with my pencil causes me internal tortures, and I have come to you to cut it away."

"That I cannot do," said the doctor.

"Why?"

"Because your hand exhibits no pathological disorder. I see at the spot you have indicated nothing more amiss than on my own hand."

"You really seem to think that I have gone out of my senses, or that I have come here to mock you," said the stranger, taking from his pocket-book a bank-note for a thousand florins, and laying it on the table. "Now, sir, you see that I am not playing off any childish jest, and that the service I seek of you is as urgent as it is important. I beg you to remove this part of my hand."

"I repeat, sir, that for all the treasures in the world you cannot make me regard as unsound a member that is perfectly sound, and still less induce me to cut it with my instruments."

"And why not?"

"Because such an act would cast a doubt upon my medical knowledge and compromise my reputation. Everybody would say that you were mad; that I was dishonest in taking advantage of your condition, or ignorant in not perceiving it."

"Very well. I will only ask a small service of you, then. I am myself capable of making the incision. I shall do it rather clumsily with my left hand; but that does not matter. Be good enough only to bind up the wound after the operation."

It was with astonishment that the doctor saw that this strange man was speaking seriously. He stripped off his coat, turned up the wristbands of his shirt, and took a bistoury in his left hand.

A second later, and the steel had made a deep incision in the skin.

"Stay!" cried the doctor, who feared that his patient might, through his awkwardness, sever some important organ. "Since you have determined on the operation, let me perform it."

He took the bistoury, and taking in his left hand the right hand of the patient, begged him to turn away his face, the sight of blood being insupportable to many persons.

"Quite needless. On the contrary, it is I who must direct you where to cut."

In fact he watched the operation to the end with the greatest coolness, indicating the limits of the incisions. The open hand did not even quiver in that of the doctor, and when the circular piece was removed, he sighed profoundly, like a man experiencing an enormous relief.

"Nothing burns you now?"

"All has ceased," said the stranger, smiling. "The pain has completely disappeared, as if it had been carried away with the part excised. The little discomfort which the flowing of blood causes me, compared with the other pain, is like a fresh breeze after a blast from the infernal regions. It does me a real good to see my blood pouring forth; let it flow, it does me extreme good."

The stranger watched with an expression of delight the blood pouring from the wound, and the doctor was obliged to insist on binding up the hand.

During the bandaging the aspect of his face completely changed. It no longer bore a dolorous expression, but a look full of good-humor was turned upon the doctor. No more contraction of the features, no more despair. A taste for life had returned; the brow was once again calmed; the color found its way back to the cheeks. The entire man exhibited a complete transformation.

As soon as his hand was laid in the sling he warmly wrung the doctor's hand with the one that remained free, and said cordially:

"Accept my sincere thanks. You have positively cured me. The trifling remuneration I offer you is not at all proportioned to the service you have rendered me: for the rest of my life I shall search for the means of repaying my debt to you."

The doctor would not listen to anything of the kind, and refused to accept the thousand florins placed on the table. On his side the stranger refused to take them back, and, observing that the doctor was losing his temper, begged him to make a present of the money to some hospital, and took his departure.

K—— remained for several days at his town house until the wound in his patient's hand should be cicatrized, which occurred without the least accident. During this time the doctor was able to satisfy himself that he had to do with a man of extensive knowledge, reflective, and having very positive opinions in regard to the affairs of life. Besides being rich, he occupied an important official position. Since the taking away of his invisible pain no trace of moral or physical malady was discoverable in him.

The cure completed, the man returned tranquilly to his residence in the country.

About three weeks had passed when, one morning, at as unseasonable an hour as before, the servant again announced the strange patient.

The stranger, whom K—— hastened to receive, entered the room with his right hand in a sling, his features convulsed, and hardly recognizable from suffering. Without waiting to be invited to sit down, he sank into a chair, and, being unable to master the torture he was enduring, groaned, and without uttering a word, held out his hand to the doctor.

"What has happened?" asked K——, stupefied.

"We have not cut deep enough," replied the stranger, sadly, and in a fainting voice. "It burns me more cruelly than before. I am worn out by it; my arm is stiffened by it. I did not wish to trouble you a second time, and have borne it, hoping that by degrees the invisible inflammation would either mount to my head or descend to my heart, and put an end to my miserable existence; but it has not done so. The pain never goes beyond the spot, but it is indescribable! Look at my face, and you will be able to imagine what it must be!"

The color of the man's skin was that of wax, and a cold perspiration beaded his forehead. The doctor unbound the bandaged hand. The point operated on was well healed; a new skin had formed and nothing extraordinary was to be seen. The sufferer's pulse beat quickly, without feverishness, while yet he trembled in every limb.

"This really smacks of the marvellous!" exclaimed the doctor, more and more astonished. "I have never before seen such a case."

"It is a prodigy, a horrible prodigy, doctor. Do not try to find a cause for it, but deliver me from this torment. Take your knife and cut deeper and wider: only that can relieve me."

The doctor was obliged to yield to the prayers of his patient. He performed the operation once again, cutting into the flesh more deeply; and, once more, he saw in the sufferer's face the expression of astonishing relief, and the curiosity at seeing the blood flow from the wound, which he had observed on the first occasion.

When the hand was dressed, the deadly pallor passed from the face, the color returned to the cheeks; but the

patient no more smiled. This time he thanked the doctor sadly.

"I thank you, doctor," he said. "The pain has once more left me. In a few days the wound will heal. Do not be astonished, however, to see me return before a month has passed."

"Oh! my dear sir, drive this idea from your mind."

The doctor mentioned this strange case to several of his colleagues, who each held a different opinion in regard to it, without any of them being able to furnish a plausible explanation of its nature.

As the end of the month approached, K—— awaited with anxiety the reappearance of this enigmatic personage. But the month passed and he did not reappear.

Several weeks more went by. At length the doctor received a letter from the sufferer's residence. It was very closely written, and by the signature he saw that it had been penned by his patient's own hand; from which he concluded that the pain had not returned, for otherwise it would have been very difficult for him to hold a pen.

These are the contents of the letter:

"Dear doctor, I cannot leave either you or medical science in doubt in regard to the mystery of the strange malady which will shortly carry me to the grave.

"I will here tell you the origin of this terrible malady. For the past week it has returned the third time, and I will no longer struggle with it. At this moment I am only able to write by placing upon the sensitive spot a piece of burning tinder in the form of a poultice. While the tinder is burning I do not feel the other pain; and the distress it causes me is a mere trifle by comparison.

"Six months ago I was still a happy man. I lived on my income without a care. I was on good terms with everybody, and enjoyed all that is of interest to a man of thirty-five. I had married a year before—married for love—a young lady, handsome, with a cultivated mind, and a heart as good as any heart could be, who had been a governess in the house of a count-

ess, a neighbor of mine. She was fortuneless, and attached herself to me, not only from gratitude, but still more from real childish affection. Six months passed, during which every day appeared to be happier than the one which had gone before. If, at times, I was obliged to go to Pesth and quit my own land for a day, my wife had not a moment's rest. She would come two leagues on the way to meet me. If I was detained late, she passed a sleepless night waiting for me; and if by prayers I succeeded in inducing her to go and visit her former mistress, who had not ceased to be extremely fond of her, no power could keep her away from her home for more than half a day; and by her regrets for my absence, she invariably spoiled the good-humor of others. Her tenderness for me went so far as to make her renounce dancing, so as not to be obliged to give her hand to strangers, and nothing more displeased her than gallantries addressed to her. In a word, I had for my wife an innocent girl, who thought of nothing but me, and who confessed to me her dreams as enormous crimes if they were not of me.

"I know not what demon one day whispered in my ear—Suppose that all this were dissimulation? Men are mad enough to seek torments in the midst of their greatest happiness.

"My wife had a work-table, the drawer of which she carefully locked. I had noticed this several times. She never forgot the key, and never left the drawer open.

"That question haunted my mind. What could she be hiding there? I had become mad. I no longer believed either in the innocence of her face or the purity of her looks, nor in her caresses, nor in her kisses. What if all that were hypocrisy?

"One morning the countess came again to invite her to her house, and, after much pressing, succeeded in inducing her to go and spend the day with her. Our estates were some leagues from each other, and I promised to join my wife in the course of a few hours.

"As soon as the carriage had quitted the court-yard,

I collected all the keys in the house and tried them on the lock of the little drawer. One of them opened it. I felt like a man committing his first crime. I was a thief about to surprise the secrets of my poor wife. My hands trembled as I carefully pulled out the drawer, and, one by one, turned over the objects within it, so that no derangement of them might betray the fact of a strange hand having disturbed them. My bosom was oppressed; I was almost stifled. Suddenly—under some lace—I put my hand upon a packet of letters. It was as if a flash of lightning had passed through me from my head to my heart. Oh! they were the sort of letters one recognizes at a glance—love-letters!

"The packet was tied with a rose-colored ribbon edged with silver.

"As I touched that ribbon this thought came into my mind: Is it conceivable?—is this the work of an honest man? To steal the secrets of his wife!—secrets belonging to the time when she was a young girl. Have I any right to exact from her a reckoning for thoughts she may have had before she belonged to me? Have I any right to be jealous of a time when I was unknown to her? Who could suspect her of a fault? Who? I am guilty for having suspected her. The demon again whispered in my ears: 'But what if these letters date from a time when you already had a right to know all her thoughts, when you might already be jealous of her dreams, when she was already yours?' I unfastened the ribbon. Nobody saw me. There was not even a mirror to make me blush for myself. I opened one letter, then another, and I read them to the end.

"Oh, it was a terrible hour for me!

"What was there in these letters? The vilest treason of which a man has ever been the victim. The writer of these letters was one of my intimate friends! And the tone in which they were written!—what passion, what love, certain of being returned! How he spoke of 'keeping the secret.' And all these letters dated at

a time when I was married and so happy! How can I tell you what I felt? Imagine the intoxication caused by a mortal poison. I read all those letters—every one. Then I put them up again in a packet, retied them with the ribbon, and, replacing them under the lace, relocked the drawer.

"I knew that if she did not see me by noon she would return in the evening from her visit to the countess—as she did. She descended from the caleçhe hurriedly, to rush toward me as I stood awaiting her on the steps. She kissed me with excessive tenderness, and appeared extremely happy to be once again with me. I allowed nothing of what was passing within me to appear in my face. We conversed, we supped together, and then retired to our bedrooms. I did not close an eye. Broad awake, I counted all the hours. When the clock struck the first quarter after midnight, I rose and entered her room. The beautiful fair head was there pressed into the white pillows—as angels are painted in the midst of snowy clouds. What a frightful lie of nature is vice under an aspect so innocent! I was resolved, with the headlong wilfulness of a madman haunted by a fixed idea. The poison had completely corroded my soul. I resolved to kill her as she lay.

"I pass over the details of the crime. She died without offering the least resistance, as tranquilly as one goes to sleep. One single drop of blood fell on my hand, you know where. I did not perceive it until the next day, when it was dry.

"We buried her without anybody suspecting the truth. I lived in solitude. Who could have controlled my actions? She had neither parent nor guardian who could have addressed to me any questions on the subject, and I designedly put off sending the customary invitations to the funeral, so that my friends could not arrive in time.

"On returning from the vault I felt not the least weight upon my conscience. I had been cruel, but she had deserved it. I would not hate her—I would forget her. I scarcely thought of her. Never did

a man commit an assassination with less remorse than I.

"The countess, so often mentioned, was at the château when I returned there. My measures had been so well taken that she had arrived too late for the interment. On seeing me she appeared greatly agitated. Terror, sympathy, sorrow, or I know not what, had put so much into her words that I could not understand what she was saying to console me.

"Was I even listening to her? Had I any need of consolation? I was not sad. At last she took me familiarly by the hand, and, dropping her voice, said that she was obliged to confide a secret to me, and that she relied on my honor as a gentleman not to abuse it. She had given my wife a packet of letters to guard, not having been able to keep them in her own house; and these letters she now requested me to return to her. While she was speaking I several times felt a shudder run through my frame. With seeming coolness, however, I questioned her as to the contents of the letters. At this interrogation the lady started, and replied angrily:

"'Sir, your wife has been more generous than you! When she took charge of *my* letters she did not demand to know what they contained. She even gave me her promise that she would never set her eyes on them, and I am convinced that she never read a line of any one of them. She had a noble heart, and would have been ashamed to forfeit the pledge she had given.'

"'Very well,' I replied. 'How shall I recognize this packet?'

"'It was tied with a rose-colored ribbon edged with silver.'

"'I will go and search for it.'

"I took my wife's keys, knowing perfectly well where I should find the packet; but I pretended to find it with much difficulty.

"'Is this it?' I asked the countess, handing it to her.

"'Yes, yes—that is it! See!—the knot I myself made has never been touched.'

"I dared not raise my eyes to hers; I feared lest she should read in them that I had untied the knot of that packet, and something more.

"I took leave of her abruptly: she sprang into her carriage and drove off.

"The drop of blood had disappeared, the pain was not manifested by any external symptom; and yet the spot marked by the drop burned me as if it had been bitten by a corrosive poison. This pain grows from hour to hour. I sleep sometimes, but I never cease to be conscious of my suffering. I do not complain to anybody: nobody, indeed, would believe my story. You have seen the violence of my torment, and you know how much the two operations have relieved me; but with the healing of the wound the pain returns. It has now attacked me for the third time, and I have no longer strength to resist it. In an hour I shall be dead. One thought consoles me; it is that she avenged herself here below. She will perhaps forgive me above. I thank you for all you have done for me. May heaven reward you."

A few days later one might have read in the newspapers that S——, one of the richest landowners, had blown out his brains. Some attributed his suicide to sorrow caused by the death of his wife; others better informed to an incurable wound. Those who best knew him said that he had been attacked by monomania, that his incurable wound existed only in his imagination.

The mischievous nature of head-coverings is written all over the pages of history. The unfolding of this tale, which is here republished from *Cornhill*, is but another case in point.

THE BLACK LACE BONNET.

"I THINK, as we are here, dear, we may as well buy a bonnet."

Cause and effect have been the subject of the deepest philosophical inquiry, but woman, with her ready wit, can illustrate the theory without a moment's hesitation: cause, the propinquity of bonnets; effect, the purchase of the same!

And if this is true of an ordinary occasion, what must it not be when, as in the present case, vast vistas of bonnets surround one, stretching away on all sides into dim distant possibilities, vague and enchanting as a wizard's cave? Bonnets of every color and shade, bonnets of every shape and description, bonnets with every trimming and decoration, bonnets for young and old, for high and low, to suit every taste and every purse!

It was little wonder that the above exclamation broke from the impassioned lips of Mrs. Aubrey, as she and her friend gazed around the beautiful show rooms of the Magasins du Louvre.

"But neither of us wants a bonnet," objected Miss Walton, in a faint tone of remonstrance.

A critic of the sterner sex would probably have remarked at this point, "Then why are you here?" But there was no one to criticise, and Mrs. Aubrey was troubled by no impertinent comments.

"Nonsense, Hester!" she said, rather sharply, "it would be absurd to lose such a chance as this; we may never have the opportunity again."

"But if we don't want it, it will be no use," said Miss Walton with the same mild air of protest.

"Then we can sell it to somebody else," said Mrs.

Aubrey promptly, and the opposition was effectually silenced.

The work of choosing is always difficult, but on the present occasion, partly owing to the infinite variety which did indeed seem calculated to suit every taste, and partly owing to the ready quickness of the saleswoman, a bonnet was quickly chosen; a black lace bonnet, quiet, stylish, thoroughly finished, neat and yet pretty, and only twenty francs. What human being could wish for more?

"That is what I call a really good bargain!" said Mrs. Aubrey in a tone of self-complacency, when, having left directions for the bonnet to be sent after them, they were returning to their hotel.

"Yes," said her cousin, "we could not possibly have bought such a bonnet for that price in England."

She did not speak very heartily, but Mrs. Aubrey took no notice; she knew that, now the purchase was really concluded, Miss Walton could not long resist the seductions of that enthralling manufacture of black lace! She said no more about it for the present, but when they were sitting in their room at the hotel that evening the subject came up again.

Mrs. Aubrey was at the table, pen in hand, making up their accounts for the day. She always did it every evening, and found it a somewhat troublesome task, as the frown on her brow testified, and her frequent recourse to the comparative money table at her side. She paused as she began to make an entry, and looked across the table at her companion, who was writing her diary. Miss Walton had just got to the words, "Bought a bonnet at the Louvre," when her cousin's voice broke in upon her meditations.

"Hester, could you give me ten francs for the bonnet?"

There was a moment's silence as Miss Walton looked up from her book with an air of surprise. "Ten francs," she said at last.

"Yes; I thought we arranged to share all expenses equally."

"Certainly," said Miss Walton, "but—" she paused a moment—"but I had no wish to buy a bonnet."

"That is just like you," said Mrs. Aubrey rather crossly; "why did you go at all then?"

Miss Walton felt rather confused; it was her way to feel confused when a puzzling problem was put before her; but she did not mean to give up her point all at once. "I suppose I went for the same reason that you did," she said.

"But you agreed to buy the bonnet," said Mrs. Aubrey, "and of course I thought you meant to share the expense."

"I don't quite understand," said Miss Walton; "do you mean that we are to wear the bonnet in turns?"

Mrs. Aubrey was silent; certainly if Miss Walton paid half the money she had a right to half the bonnet — but somehow that was not quite a comfortable arrangement.

"Do you mean that you want the bonnet altogether?" she asked.

"I don't want the bonnet at all," replied Miss Walton, rather more decisively than was her wont. "I told you so at the time."

It was an awkward position, a position which might have developed into open war if the two concerned in it had been a trifle less good friends; but Mrs. Aubrey, though hasty-tempered, was ready to own herself in the wrong, and after a short silence she spoke again.

"To tell you the truth I have been rather foolish, Hester," she said; "John only gave me a certain sum of money to spend, as you know, and he expects to see how I have spent it. Well, I have just enough to pay the journey to-morrow, and not a sou more, and as he has been so kind I would not vex him for the world. I did not want the bonnet, but somehow I could not resist it when I saw them. I wish I had never put myself in the way of temptation."

Miss Walton was thoroughly kind-hearted, and she was very fond of her cousin, so she was melted in a moment. "Don't cry, dear," she said; "we must make

the best of it now. Your husband is much too good to be angry about such a trifle."

"But I made a promise," said Mrs. Aubrey amid her tears—"I made a promise that I would not buy another bonnet for six months, and now—" she broke down in unmistakable distress.

Her cousin soothed her to the best of her ability. "Don't give way so," she said entreatingly; "it will all come right; as you said yourself, we can easily sell it. Mme. La Tour would be thankful to buy it; she likes anything from Paris."

"I quite hate the thought of seeing it again," said Mrs. Aubrey.

When the bonnet arrived in due course, however, inclosed in a neat little bandbox, she could not help feeling a recurrence of her former pride as she examined her bargain.

"Miss Wilmot would look well in it," she said reflectively.

"Oh, we shall have no trouble in selling it!" said Miss Walton; "but now let me do it up. It wont go in our trunks, so I shall have to carry it separately."

"But then John will see it when he meets us at Dover," cried Mrs. Aubrey.

"He will see the box, but he wont know what is in it," said her cousin.

Now here Miss Walton was distinctly wrong. To aid a wife in deceiving her husband is nothing short of criminality.

All through the journey Miss Walton kept a strict watch upon the bonnet box, and thankful enough she felt when they arrived safely at Dover, without any accident having befallen it.

"There is John!" cried Mrs. Aubrey, as the boat drew up to the Admiralty pier, and she waved her handkerchief enthusiastically.

Colonel Aubrey was a short, active little man with a fierce gray mustache, and sharp twinkling eyes, that seemed to see everything at once.

"Well, my dear- here you are!" he exclaimed. "No

time to lose! Make haste! How many bundles have you?"

"How long have we before we must start?" asked Mrs. Aubrey when the first greetings were over.

"Only just time to get the things through the custom house. Come along, my dear. I wish you wouldn't dawdle so!"

At the word "custom house" Miss Walton turned very pale, and clasped the bonnet box closer in her arms. How would it be possible to open it without the colonel's lynx eyes spying out the contents? She gave her cousin a significant look, but Mrs. Aubrey's head was turned the other way, and it was lost upon her.

They reached the custom house, and in the crowd of people and luggage Miss Walton hoped to be able to hide the box from official inquiry. No such luck was in store for her, however.

"Open this, please," said the man, laying his finger upon it.

Miss Walton started, blushed, and hesitated. She could not have chosen a more effectual way of fulfilling her fears. The officer took it from her arms without more ado, and proceeded to turn out its contents. Mrs. Aubrey, however, by this time had grasped the situation and proved that she was equal to it.

"We have just done here," she said. "Go on and get the tickets, or we shall miss the train."

Her ruse was successful. The colonel went out upon the platform just as the black lace bonnet was ruthlessly tumbled out in full view!

"What an escape!" murmured Miss Walton, as she repacked her precious charge and hurried after her cousins. She could not recover her fright all through the railway journey, and whenever the colonel kicked against the bonnet-box, which he did once every ten minutes, she gave a startled little gasp that made him frown and shrug his shoulders.

The ordeal was over at last, however. Ferrel Lodge was safely reached, and Miss Walton had the very great pleasure of stowing the box safely away under her bed.

This was all very well, but the difficulty was not over yet. Mrs. Aubrey was exceedingly anxious to get rid of the bonnet before her husband overhauled her accounts; therefore it was important to put the matter in train at once.

"I think we had better ask Miss Wilmot here to tea," she said next morning, as soon as the colonel had gone out to count the wall fruit, an operation that was always gone through every morning directly after breakfast.

"Yes," said Miss Walton rather doubtfully; "I think it would do better for Mme. la Tour, though."

"I don't," said Mrs. Aubrey, with a touch of her former irritation. "Miss Wilmot would look charming in it, but, of course, if you think you know better than I do—"

Happily for the cousins' peace, Miss Walton was of a practical turn. Now, as was often the case, she hit the right nail on the head.

"It is not so much a question of whom it will suit as of who may be willing to buy it," she said.

"You are right, Hester," said Mrs. Aubrey, after a moment's reflection—"quite right. We will have Miss Wilmot to tea to-night, and, if she does not want it, Mme. la Tour shall come to-morrow night. But then I must get John out of the way," she added. "Dear me, I begin to wish we had never bought the bonnet."

Miss Walton was too kind-hearted to say "I told you so"; she set her brains to work instead, and after a minute's reflection, said cheerfully, "He said yesterday that he had to go to Grimston one day soon to get some plants for the garden. Why not ask him to go this afternoon?"

"That is a good idea," said Mrs. Aubrey, and going out into the garden she asked him at once.

"I don't see why I should go to-day," said the colonel; "you only came back yesterday, and I have hardly seen you yet. Grimston is six miles off, and it would take me the whole afternoon."

"But we shall be busy unpacking to-day, dear, so I really should not have time to go out with you."

"Unpacking!" growled the colonel; "why women should carry a cargo of clothes about with them I can't conceive. I dare say you've got a shopful of gowns in your trunk, and half a dozen bonnets."

The word struck upon Mrs. Aubrey's ear with an unpleasant sound, but the colonel turned back to his fruit trees without saying any more.

Things in this world, however, never go quite as one intends that they should. The colonel was to start at three, but just as the clock struck a ring came at the front door bell, and, to Mrs. Aubrey's disgust, some visitors were shown into the drawing room.

"Oh, we heard you returned yesterday," said Mrs. Lingley in a gushing tone, "and we could not rest till we knew how you got over the journey. How do you do, Colonel Aubrey? Are you not delighted to get your wife back?"

The conversation proceeded as such conversations generally do, and Mrs. Aubrey watched the clock nervously, fearing that her husband would think it too late to start on his expedition. Her preoccupation gave her a constrained air that Mrs. Lingley put down to fatigue after her journey, and at last, to her friend's great relief, she got up to go.

"Well, good-by, Mrs. Aubrey," said Mr. Lingley, a loud, pompous man, with a strong propensity for making little jokes. "I suppose you wasted a lot of money in Paris, as ladies always do. What did your husband say to that? Eh, colonel?"

"My wife would never be guilty of such a thing," said Colonel Aubrey stiffly. His peppery temper was always aroused by any remark on himself or his belongings, and Mr. Lingley hastened to propitiate him.

"Oh, well, you know, only a joke! Ladies will be ladies; but I know Mrs. Aubrey too well to think she would really indulge in any such little extravagances."

Mrs. Aubrey had been growing more and more uneasy during this discussion, and her vexation was increased when her husband remarked, as he came back from seeing his guests off:

"What nonsense that man talks! I suppose he thinks all women as imbecile as his own wife."

"I suppose you will start at once, John?" said Mrs. Aubrey, not daring to make any reply to his observation.

"No, I shall not," said the colonel testily; "it is too late to go out at all now."

Mrs. Aubrey gave a despairing sigh; the fates were clearly against her. Five o'clock was drawing on, Miss Wilmot would arrive, and the colonel would not leave them a moment in peace. In the midst of her despair, however, the maid opened the door and announced that the pony carriage was ready.

"Dear me!" said the colonel, "I quite forgot to tell him not to come round. What shall I do?"

"Why, of course, you had better go," said his wife, a gleam of hope stealing over her countenance; "you will easily be back before dark if you drive fast."

With a good many grunts and growls, the colonel took his departure, and the two cousins were left to begin their operations. "Shall we lay the bonnet on the sofa?" said Mrs. Aubrey; "she would be sure to remark on it; or shall we gradually lead the conversation round to the Louvre, and so to bonnets, and then offer to show her our purchase?"

"I think we had better tell her at once," said Miss Walton; "it is no use beating about the bush; she need not buy it if she does not want to."

Tea had not proceeded far, therefore, when Mrs. Aubrey remarked, "I suppose you don't know any one who wants a bonnet?"

"Oh, dear! yes, I do!" said Miss Wilmot; "there is old Mrs. Brown in the almshouses, who would be thankful for one; she told me the other day she had nothing to go to church in."

"I don't mean that quite," said Mrs. Aubrey. "I meant a bonnet to buy."

"Why?" asked Miss Wilmot.

Mrs. Aubrey did not like to say, "Because I have one to sell," so she said nothing, and looked at Miss Walton.

"The fact is," said Miss Walton, "that we bought a bonnet at the Louvre that we neither of us want, and as it is pretty and cheap, and just in the latest fashion, we thought you might like to buy it."

Miss Wilmot's interest was aroused at once; what woman's would not have been at the thought of such a bargain? "Do let me see it, my dear!" she said; and accordingly the bonnet was brought down, and they all tried it on in turns.

"It certainly is very pretty," murmured Miss Wilmot, as she looked at herself in the mirror from under the erection of black lace; "how much did you say?"

"Sixteen shillings and eightpence, English money," said Mrs. Aubrey.

"Sixteen and eightpence," said Miss Wilmot, thoughtfully.

"You shall have it for sixteen shillings," said Mrs. Aubrey, who was very anxious to effect the bargain.

"Well, I will think it over," said Miss Wilmot. "Dear me, I had no idea it was so late! I shall hardly get home before dark. I will call again, Mrs. Aubrey, and let you know."

Mrs. Aubrey would rather have had a definite answer; however, she could not urge the matter further, and was fain to let her friend depart.

There is an old saw which says, "It is well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new." If the cousins had remembered this adage, they might have saved themselves much sorrow and trouble. When Mrs. Aubrey met Mme. la Tour the next morning, as she was walking down the village, it seemed to her such a good opportunity that she could not resist it.

"Good morning, madame," she said.

"Ah! good day. You come from arriving from France, is it not so?" The opportunity was made, and Mrs. Aubrey plunged into the story of the black lace bonnet.

"Ah, thank you well!" exclaimed madame enthusiastically; "I love the things of the Louvre; but, you see, I must first ask the husband; he holds the money."

And so saying, with a profusion of bows and compliments, the two ladies parted.

Mrs. Aubrey told her cousin what she had done when she returned, and was vexed that she did not receive the news with more warmth.

"But you may have put us into a very awkward position," said Miss Walton; "if both of them come for the bonnet, what are we to do?"

"That is most unlikely," said Mrs. Aubrey, with decision.

Miss Walton could not exactly see why, but she forebore to say any more. Toward evening a note arrived from Mme. la Tour containing sixteen shillings eightpence, and saying that she had received her husband's permission to make the purchase, and should be obliged if Mrs. Aubrey would send her the bonnet.

"What a triumph!" said Mrs. Aubrey delightedly; "really it has been no trouble after all. Go and fetch the box, there's a dear."

Miss Walton went up to her room. She had left the box on a chair in the corner after Miss Wilmot's visit on the previous day. It was not there now.

She rushed down-stairs breathless. "Julia," she said, "the bonnet has gone!"

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Aubrey.

"The bonnet has gone; I cannot find it anywhere."

"Nonsense," replied Mrs. Aubrey, "Martha must have put it somewhere"; and then she rang the bell violently.

"Where have you put the new bonnet box that was in Miss Walton's room?" she asked when the maid came in.

"Please, ma'am, Miss Wilmot sent up this afternoon when you were out, and said there was a bonnet box to be sent to her, and that she would send you a note to-morrow."

The cousins restrained their feelings till the servant had left the room, but then they both broke out at once: "What shall we do? What shall we do?" Neither of them said any more for some time.

Miss Walton, as usual, had flown to the practical question. "Shall we send to Mme. la Tour to say Miss Wilmot has got the bonnet, or shall we send to Miss Wilmot to say that Mme. la Tour has sent the money?"

"I don't know and I don't care," said Mrs. Aubrey tearfully.

"Well, let us leave it till the morning," said Miss Walton, feeling that in the present state of their feelings they could decide nothing.

Morning dawned, however, and the position did not improve. A note came from Mme. la Tour saying that she was going away to stay for a few days, and that she should be glad of the bonnet, also for an acknowledgment of the money; but there was no word or sign from Miss Wilmot, who, seeing that she had got the bonnet in her own keeping, was at present mistress of the situation.

"We cannot acknowledge the money until we can get the bonnet," said Mrs. Aubrey; "and yet I do not like to say anything to Miss Wilmot, for we certainly gave her first chance, and she will think that we have played her false."

"If nothing has come from her by lunch time, I will go to her and explain," said Miss Walton gallantly; and so the matter was left.

Col. Aubrey was a man of regular habits, and every morning he took a walk straight down the village street, past the church, over the bridge and back by the field path. M. la Tour also took a daily constitutional and they often met upon the road. The two could scarcely be called friends, for they fell out on every possible occasion, but they found great recreation in their quarrels, and would have been considerably duller without each other to abuse. On the morning in question, Col. Aubrey felt rather peacefully inclined, and when he perceived M. la Tour coming along in the distance, he was quite ready to join him in a walk and talk. M. la Tour's eyes were sparkling with fire, however, and he took no notice of the other's salutation.

"Halloo, mossoo, what's the matter?" cried the

colonel. He could talk French if he pleased, but he liked to rouse his friend's ire with his brutal Britishisms.

"Matter?" growled the other, fiercely. "Nation of shopkeepers!"

"Leave my nation alone!" cried the colonel, up to the boiling point in a moment.

"Alone? That is all very well," said the other, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Shopkeeper yourself!"

"Do you mean to insult me?" roared Col. Aubrey, swinging his bamboo cane. "I never sold anything in my life."

"Pooh! A man and his wife is not two any more!" said the other.

"What do you mean?" said the colonel with a stamp of the foot. "I will have the law on you for libel."

"Law! Ah! Well, two can make that sport. A thief is a man who keeps his neighbor's money."

"You are mad!" said Col. Aubrey haughtily, looking him full in the face and then walking slowly away.

He had always thought his neighbor a little queer in the upper story, and this extraordinary conduct confirmed him in his idea. He retailed the story at lunch.

"The man must be put under proper control," he said; "it is not safe to have him walking about the village. Don't look so frightened, my dear," he added, seeing Mrs. Aubrey turn pale; "I'll see that no harm comes to you."

"Really, Hester, this is getting too much," she said when lunch was over. "My nerves will not stand it much longer."

"Never mind," said Miss Walton, "I will go at once and get the bonnet back. Miss Wilmot must be made to understand; we will send it with a note of apology to Mme. la Tour, and all will be right."

"You are a friend in need," said Mrs. Aubrey, as she kissed her warmly.

Miss Walton was as good as her word. She went round to Miss Wilmot's house and was shown in. She was rather confused and disgusted to find her in the

drawing-room with the bonnet on, displaying it to her particular friend, Miss Perkins.

"And, so I think, my dear, I have made a good bargain," she was saying just as Miss Walton entered. It was an awkward beginning, but having once undertaken the mission she could not draw back, and putting a bold face upon it, she explained that not having heard from her, Mrs. Aubrey had sold the bonnet to Madame la Tour.

"It is very strange, I must say," said Miss Wilmot, taking off the bonnet as hastily as though the lace had been dyed with poison: "very strange, indeed! Not that I should ever have thought of buying it for myself; it is poorly made and not nearly worth the money."

Considering the words she had heard as she entered, Miss Walton thought this a somewhat extraordinary announcement. She made allowance for Miss Wilmot's natural vexation, however, and got away as quickly as she could, the bonnet-box in her hand. It was growing dark, and she made her way straight to the drawing-room.

"Here it is!" she cried joyfully; "now all our troubles are over."

She had hardly spoken when a loud peal came at the door bell, and a great altercation was heard in the hall.

"Whatever is the matter?" cried Mrs. Aubrey. "John is out. What shall we do?"

"M. la Tour!" said the maid, opening the door, with a very white face. "Oh, ma'm, he is so angry!"

"I will speak to him," said Miss Walton, and, taking the box, she rushed out and thrust it into his arms.

M. la Tour was mollified in a moment. "*Mille pardons!*" he exclaimed, holding the box in one arm and waving the other wildly to express his contrition. Miss Walton apologized in voluble English, he replied in as voluble French, and the interview ended in the warmest terms of respectful affection on both sides.

"There, that is over!" said Miss Walton as she returned to the drawing-room; "and we have heard the last of the black lace bonnet."

Colonel Aubrey, as we have said, was a man of regular habits, and having walked one way in the morning, he always went the other way in the afternoon, returning home in time for dinner. He was sauntering home now in the gathering twilight, swinging his cane and humming a few deep bass notes. As he unlatched his garden gate he saw a figure looming up in the twilight. It was M. la Tour!

"What does he want here?" muttered the colonel, remembering their passage of arms in the morning. As he spoke he noticed that M. la Tour tried to avoid him, and that he carried a bundle under his arm. Instantly an idea flashed over him.

"It is not madness; it is crime!" he exclaimed, and rushing forward, he raised his bamboo. "Thief yourself," he cried. "Give me that this moment."

He tried to snatch the box away, but M. la Tour held it fiercely. "Villain," he cried, "ah! detestable; you have all wrong; go, go!"

The colonel took no notice of his remarks. "Give me that!" he shouted again. The box fell from his prisoner's hand, his foot slipped, and the men rolled over and over each other on the gravel path.

"There seems to be a great noise going on," said Mrs. Aubrey presently, opening the French window; "what can be the matter? Oh, Hester! look there!"

The noise of shouts and cries rose through the still evening air, and the two ladies could dimly see dark forms struggling on the ground; little Toby rushed out to lend his loud barkings to the general confusion, and for some time they stood trembling with fright, unable to distinguish a word. Soon, however, a piercing cry came to their ears: "Ah, villain! the bonnet is to me!"

"It is M. la Tour!" screamed Miss Walton.

"And John!" added Mrs. Aubrey, as the colonel's voice exclaimed: "Skulking thief! I'll teach you—take that!"

The two ladies flew to the combatants, and tried to drag them apart.

"Oh, John, it's all right, I gave it to him!" cried

Mrs. Aubrey, while Miss Walton reiterated: "He didn't know; it was a secret, a secret! oh, why wont they listen? Do stop!"

The colonel rose to his feet at last. "That'll teach him a lesson!" he said grimly.

"Oh, John!" sobbed his wife, who by this time was in hysterics—"oh, what shall I do, what shall I do? He bought the bonnet, he bought the b-b-b——" Her voice died away in a passion of tears.

"What!" said the colonel, and said no more.

Toby meanwhile was dancing a dance of triumph round the prostrate form of M. la Tour, who lay groaning and moaning as though he had been mortally wounded.

"Oh, John, you've killed him!" said Miss Walton, distracted; "he's dead!"

"Dead, rubbish!" said the colonel; "do him good! What you all mean, I don't know. What's he doing here, what's he carrying away?"

M. la Tour dragged himself up from the ground at this point. "Good evening, monsieur!" he said, "we will see to the law now," and he began to walk away, limping very much as he went.

"Come back!" cried Miss Walton wildly; "it's all a mistake. "Oh, Toby, do be quiet!"

"What's a mistake?" said the colonel, gruffly. "If Julia would stop blubbering, and Toby would stop barking, and La Tour would stop that ridiculous groaning, I might be able to make out what the row is about."

"It's about a black lace bonnet," said Miss Walton, desperately; "we bought it and we thought you would be angry, and we tried to sell it, and Mme. la Tour bought it, and, and——" she stopped, unable to say more.

The colonel, to do him justice, was a man of sense. The first thing he did was to rush after his retreating foe and seize him by the hand.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "you are right, I was wrong."

No Englishman could have made an ampler apology.

M. la Tour was not to be appeased all at once. He

talked very big about vengeance, and pistols, and honor or death; but gradually, as he took in the situation, his ill-humor relaxed, and he joined the colonel in a hearty laugh.

"Come in and have some dinner with us," said the colonel. Dinner is the national peace offering, and, although a Frenchman, M. la Tour understood the overture. He bowed politely, and accepted the terms of peace.

"I will never deceive you again," sobbed Mrs. Aubrey, as she threw her arms round her husband's neck.

"Not till next time, I suppose," said the colonel; "well, well, let us go in and wash the dust off."

They all turned toward the house in a rapture of reconciliation, but Miss Walton was always practical, even in the most romantic moment. "I think we had better take in the bonnet," she said.

"Oh! of course," said the colonel, and they went back to fetch it.

"What has Toby got?" said Mrs Aubrey.

Ah! what had Toby got? Once more Toby was dancing a war dance of triumph, but this time it was over no vanquished foe; the ground was strewn far and near with fragments of the crushed and battered bonnet box, and Toby was rushing hither and thither, shaking between his teeth the ruined remains of the black lace bonnet!

Time will efface even the deepest impressions. In time M. la Tour forgot his offended dignity, and madame her disappointment. In time Miss Wilmot condescended to bow to Mrs. Aubrey and Miss Walton when she met them in the street; but the two cousins cannot forget that sad episode in their career, nor pass with total indifference that dark corner of the garden, where the colonel has erected a tiny stone over a little mound, which bears the strange but suggestive words: "To the Memory of a Black Lace Bonnet."

Another ghost—and of the same old sort. People who have tremors when passing graveyards and when sleeping in haunted bedrooms, would do well to read this story by Will Allen Dromgoole.

A TALE OF A DISMAL SWAMP.

THE place had always been "ha'nted," if one might credit what was said in "the quarters." Indeed there was scarcely a slave on the plantation but had a startling experience to relate of the ghosts that haunted Graysville, one of the most famous old plantations of Louisiana. Every slave that ever trod Southern soil is afraid of graveyards, and the Graysville graveyard was indeed a solemn old place, and awesome enough to those minds superstitiously inclined. It was not more than a hundred yards from the back doorstep, and in full range of the little windows of the room that had been the sitting-room of all my grandmothers for unnumbered generations.

It was not originally meant to be a graveyard—one of the first Gray women had lost a babe, and it was her desire that the child might be buried somewhere in sight of her window, where she might have the comfort of seeing its little grave at all times, and knowing it was not quite alone when the wind blew at night and the snow fell over Graysville.

But the little grave which held the dead did not by any means help to heal the wound in the heart of the living, and before the flowers bloomed again in the old Louisiana woods another grave was opened beside the lonely little sleeper, and Grandmother Gray went to keep her child company under the rustling old live-oaks. Of course grandfather was put to sleep beside his wife, and so in time all the Grays were laid there under those grim old oaks, and the "family graveyard," so to speak, established within a stone's-throw of the back door.

But it was not the graveyard which made one afraid

of Graysville. Beyond, more than a mile, and cut off by one of those still, treacherous lagoons so common to Louisiana, stretched for several miles a low, wet strip of timber-land known as the Dismal Swamp.

The place was full of uncanny associations—as the hiding-place for runaway slaves, the hot-bed of malaria and all manner of ills and aches. At length the crowning ill was put upon it when it became the abode of the Graysville ghost.

True, these stories of the ghost never, for a long while at least, got beyond the quarters; but there they were rehearsed night after night with startling and blood-curdling variations.

It was said that nothing ever came out of the swamp alive—even the cattle, wandering within its deadly limits, were either stung to death by the poisonous reptiles there, or else broke their necks among the tangles of bamboo and rattan, cross-vine and swinging mosses of the swamp.

I was always mortally afraid of the swamp, and no human power could have persuaded me beyond the separating waters of the lagoon.

Of the ghosts I had no fear whatever; but stories of the runaway slaves, the poisonous atmosphere, and the unfortunate cattle had filled my mind with a horror of the place which to this day I have never been able to shake off.

My first recollection of it was the time one of the men came running in from the field, panting with fear and declaring that something like a big black shadow had run out of the swamp and chased him home.

The "something" proved to be Crazy Dick, an old slave who had disappeared months before and was supposed to be dead somewhere in the impenetrable depths of the Dismal Swamp. He had, indeed, been there all the while, living upon the wild plums and berries which grew there in rank profusion. He returned to his hiding-place and died there, his dead body having been discovered by seeing the buzzards circling about it on the further bank of the lagoon.

"Literally torn to pieces by the witches," they said in the cabins of the superstitious blacks, who repudiated the existence of the briers for the more thrilling idea of "witches."

From that time forward the ghost of Crazy Dick was said to wander about the swamp, and could be seen almost any night, "all in white," crossing the lagoon and the rice field, and coming on across the lawn to the graveyard, where he disappeared "just at daylight," in his own grave in the far corner of the lot, "over todes the great house." The story was told until it was believed by every negro on the plantation; and when at last the overseer himself, returning from the quarters after midnight, where he had been to sit up with a very sick slave, declared that he had with his own eyes seen the ghost, there was something of a panic in and about Graysville.

I was a girl then of about seventeen years of age, and my terror of the swamp became so intense that I would stop my ears and leave the room at the bare mention of the place. It preyed upon my thoughts day and night.

At night my dreams were full of it. I had wandered among all those mysterious depths, trampled upon the nest of the copperhead and adder, breathed the soft perfume of the wild magnolia, and brushed aside, as it trailed against my forehead, the rank red blossoms of the poisonous oak and the deadly ivy. In my dreams I had dipped my feet into the still, sleek waters of the lagoon, and followed the path made by the ghost of Crazy Dick across the rice field and the family graveyard, and lost myself in the depths of its dull, dense shadows.

I would wake at sunrise, nervous and feverish, and as weary as if I had indeed made the horrible journey. And even then I would creep under the bed covers and try to forget the horrors of my dream.

I grew thin and pale and nervous. All the gold in Louisiana could not tempt me near the Dismal Swamp; my terror of it increased as I, night after night, roamed through its terrible tangles of vine and brier in my dreams.

One morning the very climax of wonder was reached when my father, returning home just before day from a meeting of the rice planters at a village some fifteen miles distant, himself encountered the Graysville ghost returning from its midnight ramble through the Dismal Swamp.

It was only half visible in the uncertain light, but still distinct enough for him to distinguish a supple, willowy something clad in white and moving without noise, almost without motion, he thought, toward the dismal shadows of the Graysville graveyard. There it disappeared, as usual.

Strange to say, when my father was rehearsing the story at the breakfast-table, I seemed to have known it all before; and had he left off, I felt sure I could have gone on with it myself.

This was due, doubtless, to the fact, as I thought, of my having visited the swamp so often in my dreams.

The same day my mother came to me with instructions not to visit in my daily rambles over the plantation certain low sections where I was fond of going for the wild blossoms and ripe fruit. I could not understand the restriction, and said so very freely. She then showed me the boots I had worn—as she supposed—the day before in my rambles.

"But I did not go out yesterday!" I exclaimed, no little astonished at the sad condition of my rubber walking boots, so necessary for the low, moist Louisiana lands.

"They were found at your door this morning," she told me, "where you usually place them to be cleaned."

It was odd, to be sure—and for many weeks remained to me an enigma. My mother, I was sure, believed I was telling her a deliberate falsehood, inasmuch as the very next morning the boots were found in the same place and in precisely the same condition.

At length my mother removed the boots to her own closet, and, locking the door, put the key in her pocket; saying as she did so, "Now we will see who it is that's in the habit of wearing your shoes. Nobody knows

where the key of the closet door is hid except yourself, Elsa."

I must explain that by this time, owing to my vehement denial as to having worn the boots, suspicion had fallen upon Louise, my mother's housemaid, a quadroon girl about my own size and age.

That night my dreams were terrible—the boots played no inconsiderable part in my nervous and excited fancies. First, I imagined that I must have them, and in order to get them it was necessary to obtain the closet key hidden in the pocket of my mother's blue chintz gown that always hung at night upon a chair immediately behind her bed.

I dreamed that I had seen her forget to fasten the door leading into her bedroom, and that I arose, and, tiptoeing across the hall, went down the stairs, and, sure enough, found the door unfastened. I went in, and groping in the darkness, found the blue chintz, removed the key, and with the utmost ease found—and fitted it in—the closet door. I found the boots full as easily, locked the door, returned the key to its place, and went out as noiselessly as I had entered.

I sat down upon the doorstep in the moonlight, drew the shoes upon my bare feet, and started out as rapidly as I knew how toward the graveyard, across the rice field, through the white-looking lagoon, and into the horrid shades of the Dismal Swamp. All night long, in my dreams, I followed the wild birds or fled from the hiss of the serpents which made their home in the deadly morass. The plover, startled from its nest, brushed by me with a shriek; and once I fancied a long serpent swung from a swamp willow and planted its fangs in my cheek. But when I put out my hand to brush it aside I found that a branch of a trumpet vine had swept across my face, the rich red blossoms dropping the dew from their cups into my lips, which were parched and dry. I was not in the least frightened, but plunged on deeper and deeper into the vast wilderness. Once I heard the blood-hounds baying, and knew they were on the track of some runaway slave

who had fled to the protecting jungles of the Dismal Swamp.

At last I grew weary and turned homeward. I crossed the lagoon, lying still and white in the gray dawn, and traversed again the rice field and the lonely path across the graveyard; then I sat down upon the doorstep and removed my long boots, carrying them up to my door, where I left them for Louise to have cleaned. Then I crept to bed and remembered nothing more until noon, when I awoke to find my mother bending over me with heavy, troubled eyes as I had seen her many a time when some of us were ill.

I yawned wearily.

"Mother," I said, "I went through the Dismal Swamp again in my dreams last night."

"And the Graysville ghost was seen again last night," she replied, hesitatingly, as if afraid to tell me.

"Who saw it this time?" I asked.

"I."

"Mother!"

I sat up in bed, startled, and pale with a great fear. I brushed my hand across my temples to make my thoughts clear.

As I did so I felt a long, deep cut upon my cheek.

"Mother!" I tried to say. "Mother!" And throwing off the bed covers I sprang out upon the floor.

My long night-dress was spattered and draggled with mire; my knees were torn and bleeding. Cockle-burrs and marsh mosses were clinging to my hair; but my feet were white and clean.

Instantly I understood it all, and fell with a shriek into my mother's arms.

I was the Graysville ghost, and I was the somnambulist who had, night after night, plunged deeper and deeper in the jungles of the Dismal Swamp.

They followed my tracks as far as they dared penetrate into that dreary morass. How I did it remains a mystery, but certain it is that, asleep, I had wandered alone through the deadly swamp which even in the day I shuddered to think of.

This incident of the Spanish wars is related in true military fashion by Carmen Sylva, the gifted Queen of Roumania. Why Pablo Domenick should have borne a blow upon his person so badly when he could bear blows upon his heart so well, is one of those metaphysical paradoxes which we can only deplore, but cannot explain. The story has been translated from the German for ROMANCE by Julia Schayer.

PABLO DOMENICK.

THE Carlist general Don Fernando de Ybarreta, arriving by way of the *chaussèe* of Santander for the purpose of routing Bilboa, who was besieging the Carlists, found himself brought to a standstill in the valley of Somorastro. The surrounding hills were strongly intrenched, forming a series of almost insurmountable obstacles. The position, from which a hundred cannon were vomiting death, must be carried without delay, and the attack at once began.

Don Fernando had installed himself with his staff in a farm-house, the front of which was already riddled by bullets. From its walled-up windows, pierced by small loop-holes, the course of events could be plainly observed.

The troops marched bravely to the assault, but met with a reception that caused them to falter.

"Gentlemen," cried the general suddenly, "this will not do! The boys are doing their best, but too many are falling. If something is not done to infuse new courage into them they will become disheartened. I am going up there for a while. If you like, you may go with me."

Then, approaching a young Frenchman who was following the staff, he said to him brusquely in French:

"*You* would do better to remain here."

The young man colored to the roots of his hair.

"Well, well," said the general, smiling, "I see how it is. You are a Frenchman among Spaniards—two vain nations. Come with us, then, since you will not listen to reason."

A moment later he had thrown himself upon his horse, and, followed by his whole staff, was galloping along the crest of a green hillock overlooking the scene of action.

The light infantry marched intrepidly forward until they reached a certain ravine where bullets were falling in a deadly shower. There, panic-stricken, they turned and ran, concealing themselves behind rocks, trees, or any shelter that offered itself. Then, recovering their nerve and re-forming, they returned again and again to the charge.

Each time a fresh detachment passed, the general rose in his stirrups and shouted: "Ah, here is Mendigorria! And Cordoba! Hurrah! Now we will show them what we can do! Forward, Mendigorria! Forward, Cordoba!"

And the poor doomed fellows would shout lustily back:

"Hurrah for General de Ybarreta!"

"Hurrah for Spain!" returned the general.

Two thousand men had already fallen. Nevertheless Don Fernando smoked tranquilly away at an enormous cigar, very expensive and very delicious, only taking it from his lips to flick the ash from the end delicately with one white-gloved finger, or to utter his war-cry. The officers of his staff smoked also, but nervously, in spasmodic whiffs. A cigar lasted hardly five minutes, for balls were raining and pelting upon the hillock.

Close to the general's side clung his little trumpeter, who, one hand on the right boot of Don Fernando, in the other his silver clarion, watched incessantly his commander's face, ready to sound his *fanfare* as ordered. A ball struck his forehead. Without a cry the boy rolled to the ground—dead.

"Poor little fellow!" said the general. "Remind me to-night, gentlemen, that I am to write to his parents. They are excellent people, living near my own home."

At this moment the "Havanna," a regiment commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Don Vicente de la Cueva, arrived on the scene. As the general saw it, he

rose still higher in his stirrups, shouting an electrifying "Hurrah!"

The regiment had a great reputation. Its commander passed for a lion of bravery, and not without reason. Not long before, he, Don Vicente, being then only a captain, one regiment after another in Don Fernando's division became insubordinate. One night, after a troublesome day, Don Vicente thought he might venture to retire, and threw himself half undressed on his bed. All at once it seemed to him that he heard a noise below, and with naked feet, just as he was, he went down to find his men gathering up their effects and buckling their belts by the dim and smoky glare of torches.

The sudden entrance of the captain stupefied them; all but one, who boldly advanced, and, with a defiant air, said:

"Very well then, Don Vicente!"

The captain seized a sabre and felled the mutineer to the earth; then in a voice of thunder commanded:

"To arms!"

After consulting each other with frightened and downcast looks, the men obeyed and took up their guns.

"Attention! Present—arms!" commanded the captain, passing slowly before them, piercing them with a glance so flaming that the very ground seemed sinking from under their feet.

"I ought to deliver you all over to justice," he said, sternly, "but I will take into consideration the fact that you have returned to your duty, and I will only have a portion of you punished. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—forward! Numbers ten, eleven, twelve—forward! Number twenty——"

The men obeyed, pale, half dead with fright. Then a smile passed over the fine face of the captain.

"Come, boys," he said; "I see that you are at bottom as good as you are brave. I pardon you all! Go to bed and sleep."

From that day he was the idol of his men. The next morning Don Vicente and this very company, including

the man he had knocked senseless on the preceding night, carried a redoubt with splendid gallantry.

There was nothing of the hero in the appearance of Don Vicente. Short, thin, with small feet, rings on his fingers, and a little dyed mustache—such was the man, to the casual glance, yet something in his eye and in the formation of his lower jaw indicated a fiery temperament and an indomitable will. For the rest, he was abstemious in his habits, eating little, and drinking no alcoholic liquors.

It will be seen that Don Fernando had reason to hail with joy the appearance of the "Havanna."

Yet even these brave men halted, undecided, seeing what lay between them and the redoubt.

"What has come over you, boys?" suddenly cried out one of their number, an agile, well-built young fellow, with brilliant dark eyes and curling, pointed beard. It was Pablo Domenick, whose courage was a proverb in the camp. "What are you afraid of?" he shouted again. "Come on! It is mere child's play!"

As he spoke he came leisurely forward, rolling a cigarette, which he tucked behind one ear; then another, which he lit and began calmly smoking.

The men still hesitated. Throwing his gun to his shoulder, with his hands in his pockets, the young man marched ahead, puffing at his cigarette as tranquilly as though he were taking a walk for his health and some one was shooting peas at him for the mere fun of the thing. A thrill ran through the ranks; they moved, and uttering a resonant "Hurrah!" rushed after Domenick.

From the summit of the hillock General de Ybarreta watched through his glass the progress of the fight. All at once his face crimsoned. "Who is that man marching alone to the attack?" he cried. "Actually, the fellow is smoking! See, the others recover themselves. They are following him to the charge! A good many survive the onslaught! Hurrah! The redoubt is taken! The day is ours! Let that fellow be brought to me."

The aide-de-camp gave his horse the spurs, and returned with Pablo Domenick, still black with powder.

"Here is the cross of honor for you, my boy," said the general.

Pablo saluted with true Spanish grace and dignity, as imperturbable in joy as he had been under fire.

"You must bear a charmed life, that you dare thus march alone to take a redoubt," said Don Fernando.

"Yes, general," responded Pablo Domenick, simply.

A laugh arose from the officers of the staff.

"What?" said the general, with a look of amazement. "You really believe yourself invulnerable?"

With a perfectly serious air Pablo drew from his breast a little image of a saint.

"My *novia* [betrothed] gave me this," he said, quietly. "Bullets cannot harm me."

The officers no longer laughed; they regarded with admiration the robust, handsome young soldier, with his soft, agreeable voice, small hands and feet, glossy mustache, mobile face, and merry air.

"Present yourself for the grand cross—the cross of San Fernando, my brave fellow," said the general, presently.

Then, indeed, a blush dyed Pablo's dark cheek, his eyes kindled, his nostrils quivered, his breast expanded, and he pressed his lips lightly together.

The cross of San Fernando! That was an honor! To obtain it one must formally apply for it and furnish proof of one's worthiness. Only after one's right to possess it is established by the testimony of the commanders themselves to the splendid achievements of the aspirant is it accorded. Then it is not worn in sight, but stitched inside the coat, never to be laid aside.

Some days later Domenick might have been seen standing by the side of a comrade, who, having placed a sheet of paper on a drum-head, was writing clumsily at his dictation. Pablo's ignorance of the art of writing was a source of great grief to him, preventing him as it did from holding a commission.

The letter he was dictating ran as follows:

My Dear Paquita: I hope that you are well and that everything is going as you would wish. I am well. They have given me the cross of San Fernando. I do not know why. The general asked me if I was bullet-proof. Then I showed him the holy image that you gave me. I hope that I shall come home in four weeks, and if you have not forgotten me by that time we will be married. With love, thine,

Pablo Domenick.

Long before the time set by Pablo, the commander, Don Vicente, sent for him.

"The doctor of the regiment wants you for his servant, my boy, you are so clever and faithful," said Don Vicente.

The blood mounted to Pablo's cheek.

"My commander," he said, "I cannot become a servant. We are of a good family, from father to son; masters on our own land. I cannot serve as a menial."

"What, Domenick!" cried the Don. "You, the steadiest, most obedient soldier in the army, you rebel now for the first time? You should remember that in whatever capacity you serve you are in the service of the king."

Pablo's pale lips contracted.

"Very well, my commander, since you wish it," he answered, in a low tone. His look was strangely sad.

That evening he presented himself at the quarters of Don Ramon Etchebaster, doctor of the regiment. Don Ramon was a Basque, and an excellent surgeon. He was tall and obese; his coat was tightly buttoned about him. He had a red face, a bristling white mustache, clear gray eyes, and was a good-hearted but irascible man.

Domenick stood before him twisting his cap nervously.

"I promise to serve you faithfully," he said, "but I would like to make one request."

"Well, boy, speak," said the doctor.

"I like to work, and never complain of having too

much to do," replied Pablo, slowly, with a sort of hesitation in his voice. "You will scold me as much as you please; you may even swear at me. I only ask you never to raise your hand against me, never to touch me! If you should, I do not know what I might do!"

"Why should I ever strike you?" responded the doctor. "I shall depend upon you, and shall in return always treat you well."

"I simply wanted to warn you," said Pablo, quietly. "No one knows what might happen, and that is something I could never bear. You will remember, will you not?"

"Of course, my boy; I have no apprehensions. I know that I can trust you, and you must trust me, too."

Pablo went away with a serious countenance, and entered upon his duties with zeal and conscientiousness. But his once merry face remained clouded, and he no longer sang and jested as before. Even his elastic gait had lost its ease and pride.

"How is Domenick conducting himself?" inquired the commander.

"Oh, perfectly," responded the doctor. "I do not have to think of anything. Domenick thinks for me. He takes care of me like a mother. He lets me grumble at him without a murmur, is always on hand, never gossips; in short, he is a jewel."

"He is a hero!" said the commander.

Pablo exerted himself to provide all sorts of little luxuries for his master as a pleasant surprise when he came home harassed and unnerved from the hospital, where he had seen many a vigorous young man breathe his last, many a father of a family go out into the world a cripple. His inner pain and *ennui* betrayed themselves too often in impatience and violence of speech, but Pablo never once lost his calmness and gentleness of demeanor.

"To-night," said the doctor, on one occasion, as he buttoned his uniform before going out, "to-night I shall come home at seven o'clock. Have my supper

ready to serve on my arrival. I have a difficult operation to perform, and shall be very tired."

Pablo prepared his master's supper with special care. On the stroke of seven all was ready, and an appetizing odor spread itself through the room. But the doctor did not come.

Disappointed at his delay, Pablo covered the dishes to keep the contents from becoming cold. He did think at one time of setting them aside and preparing others; but his master might enter at any moment, hungry and impatient. Better that he should find a poor supper than none at all, after a long and fatiguing day, reasoned Pablo.

He wandered uneasily about, now seating himself in the doorway, now returning to the room. Eight o'clock sounded; then half-past eight. The sky was overspread with clouds big with rain; darkness fell rapidly. At last, through the twilight, detaching itself from the gathering shadows, appeared the silhouette of Don Ramon.

With a more nervous step than was natural to him, even in moments of irritation, he entered, threw his cap aside, moved the lamps impatiently, seated himself at the table and drew the dishes toward him.

Pablo ventured to say that the supper had been ready a long time; that it would not be very good.

Don Ramon did not appear to hear him. Pouring down glass after glass of wine, he began storming against his assistants at the hospital—asses, vagabonds, and blackguards; against the stupid "Red Cross" and the inadequate bandages provided for his use; against everybody and everything, in short. Finally he stopped talking and began to eat. But the supper, so appetizing, so carefully prepared, was ruined—the meat dry, the potatoes cold.

"Vile mess, fit only for a dog!" he cried, after several attempts.

Then, ejecting what he had in his mouth, and throwing the dishes to the floor in a fury, he struck Pablo full in the face.

Instantly Pablo dashed out of the room into the night and the storm. The doctor, as suddenly returned to his senses, remained motionless. He recalled Pablo's request, and, stricken with shame, regarded the fragments scattered over the floor. He went to the window, against which the rain was beating. Taking out his watch, he saw that he was an hour and a half late; a feeling of uneasiness and pain came over him; his heart swelled in his bosom.

For a long time Don Ramon paced the small apartment, waiting, watching, for the return of Domenick. The candles guttered, the flames vacillating in the current of air that entered by the loose joints of the windows.

"A bad day!" muttered Don Ramon. "Several operations failed, and then, to crown all, such a humiliation as this!"

He recalled his frequent outbreaks against Pablo, who had never once murmured. Each little scene of that kind passed before his eyes in exaggerated form. He resolved to repair these injuries. He would buy a ring for Pablo's betrothed; he would help them set up their modest household. He stopped every moment, listening to the least sound; not a step was to be heard, only the rain rushing in streams over the flagstones. Weary at last, he extinguished the lights and threw himself upon his bed. For a long time sleep fled from him; each time that he began to doze it seemed to him that he heard the step of Domenick, and he started up, every sense wide awake. But, finally, excessive fatigue overcame his heaviness of heart, and repeating to himself that he would make good his wrongs against Pablo, he fell into a heavy sleep.

Meanwhile Pablo himself was wandering through the country like one bereft of sense, neither noting nor caring whither his feet led him. Once, as the lightning revealed to his sight a shrine, he threw himself upon his knees and tried to pray, but the prayer never reached his lips. Only one word escaped them continually—vengeance! Vengeance on the man who

had struck him full in the face, him, the proud, the free, the unoffending Pablo!

He did not forget that his religion required one to be patient under injuries; that he who took vengeance into his own hands should perish.

"And my beautiful little betrothed, my well-beloved one!" he groaned. "They will take me from her, they will shoot me like a dog, and they will not even give me a Christian's grave!"

He told himself this over and over, but the blow still burned on his cheek; the rain could not wash it away. He cast himself down upon the wet earth and bit at the grass; he dashed his head against the foot of the cross; his veins seemed filled with molten brass. He felt as if his heart must burst. He was near to suffocation, and must open his mouth and beat himself upon the breast to recover his breath.

"And I warned him, too!" he cried aloud, wildly. "I told him how it would be, and yet he did not remember! And why? Because a wounded man died under his hand, perhaps! As if it were not all the same whether one dies in battle or under the surgeon's knife, or——"

He did not finish, for the thought that entered his mind made his heart stand still.

He recalled his past life, so honest and blameless, and yet in a few hours, perhaps, he would have covered himself with infamy. But had not that blow in the face already degraded him? Could he fall lower? He shook with wrath, remembering it. He was filled with a hate of Don Ramon so fierce, so bitter, that he felt as if he could throw himself upon him and strangle him in his bed. But no, not thus, not thus.

He seated himself upon a stone, letting the water run through his clothing, pulling nervously at the points of his beard as though to tear them out by the roots. He had the cross of the brave; he was designated for the greatest distinction of all—the cross of San Fernando—and yet he was planning to commit an act of cowardice! "But the action of Don Ramon was still

more cowardly," he reasoned, "for I was defenceless, and he had dishonored, insulted me!"

He pressed his hands over his eyes, feeling the blood rush to his head. At that moment he even hated Don Vicente, who had humiliated him, the proud Pablo, by compelling him to serve as a menial. And still he loved his commander so devotedly! It was for him that he had performed his great feats of arms, his many heroic actions. It was to please him that he had accepted his humble position; he would have gone through fire for his sake.

"Ah, Don Vicente!" he cried aloud. "I love you! You are a hero! Why, why did you ask this of me! And if I do—*that*, you will order me shot like a dog! Yes. But afterward, *afterward*, my commander, you will be sorry for me, you will be sad; I know it."

Sobs shook him; he stamped upon the earth, gritted his teeth, and fled further on into the wild mountain gorge where he found himself. He would put a great distance between himself and Don Ramon, he would prevent himself from committing the crime he felt compelled to commit. To kill Don Ramon was to throw away his own life, yet how could he bear to live, ruined, dishonored?

Before him rose the form of his little *fiancée*. How she would weep when she heard of his death, yet how could he embrace her now? He passed his dripping sleeve across his still burning cheek. No, water could not efface the shameful stain—it must be washed out in blood!

At last the dawn broke, cold and wan. Pablo raised his eyes. His mouth had a bitter taste, his eyes held a savage melancholy. So might look Nemesis, approaching a guilty world to crush those who believe themselves secure.

He looked for the cross before which he had knelt, and, not finding it, flung himself down before another.

"Gentle Jesus," he murmured, "forgive the poor sinner who struck me, and that other poor sinner who could not support the disgrace!"

At this moment the clouds parted, and far up in the eastern heavens rose mountains of fiery crimson. The sun had risen.

It is the Sunday parade. The troops are drawn up in line. General de Ybarreta and his brilliant staff arrive at full gallop. The wet thyme, crushed beneath their horses' hoofs, perfumes the air. In the gray sky the slow-moving clouds rise like the smoke of cannon. The trees still drip with rain, and the soaked earth yields beneath the foot.

The general rides, smiling and saluting, along the line. He examines the men complacently; he perceives Pablo, also, and wonders at his gloomy looks, forgetting him the next moment. Following the general come the commanders, the aides-de-camp, the doctors.

Pablo is in his place and presents arms. No one notices the hungry glance with which he devours Don Vicente. He, on his part, sees that Pablo is not wearing his cross. He cannot see, however, how violently is beating the heart beneath the place where the cross has hung.

Now appears Don Ramon. Pale as death Pablo makes three steps forward, shoulders his gun, fires, and Don Ramon, shot through the heart, turning his eyes an instant upon his slayer, falls without a word from his horse—dead.

Pablo drops his gun, crosses his arms, and, with head bowed, quietly awaits his arrest.

The witnesses of the deed ask each other if Pablo has lost his senses, and wait with intense anxiety the result of the trial, which takes place the same afternoon.

"You killed Don Ramon intentionally?" Pablo is asked.

"Intentionally."

"What had he done to you?"

"He struck me in the face."

All exchanged glances.

"What had you done to cause him to strike you?"

"Nothing."

"Do you mean to say that Don Ramon struck you for nothing?"

"I swear it."

"But how was that possible? Explain yourself."

In the simplest and quietest manner Pablo related the circumstances. The officers would gladly have found extenuating circumstances.

"Did you know that the gun was loaded?" he was asked.

"I loaded it myself."

"And you did so with the intention of killing Don Ramon?"

"I was firmly resolved to do so."

"Did you reflect upon the consequences? Did you know what the penalty of your crime must be?"

"I did know."

The officers consulted together. Only one decision was possible. The law must take its course. Pablo Domenick must die.

He listened to the reading of his sentence with dry eyes and an almost impassive face. He was to be shot at sunrise of the next day! His lips trembled slightly for a moment—that was all.

The night was passed with a priest, to whom he gave his cross and the image of a saint he wore in his bosom, to be sent to his betrothed after his death.

"Tell her," he said, with a sad smile, "that it was only good against balls—it could not save me from blows."

About the camp-fires Pablo's comrades discussed the affair, some violently, some quietly, according to their temperaments., but all were alike heavy-hearted.

Above Pomorastro, upon a plateau overlooking the Bay of Biscay, there is a small, half-ruined cemetery. Framed in oaks and beeches, the blue sea stretches off into the distance. The soil, wherever it is not carpeted with flowers, is of a red color. The wall of the cemetery, overrun with moss and flowers, showed red in the

morning sun. The ancient trees whispered and bent low in the light sea breeze. A single bird flung his clear song upon the fresh air. Presently the earth resounded with firm, measured steps, the sound of muffled drums made itself heard, and deploying over a vast extent the Carlist troops advanced. At the head came the superb hussars of the "Pavia y Princessa," next the "Lucana Lancers," and after them the artillery, composed of men of Aragon, splendid fellows, with muscles of iron and eyes like blazing coals. Last of all came the "Havanna," under Don Vicente, Pablo's old commander. Nine sappers were detached from this regiment and stationed near the cemetery.

There they were all in line. Except for some brief words of command the silence was profound—so profound that one might almost hear the distant breaking of the surf upon the shore, or the beating of his own heart.

Don Vicente had given his orders to the sappers in an almost inaudible voice; his face was so drawn that the skin seemed to adhere to the bones.

A shudder passed through the ranks, as the priest, in sacerdotal robes, walked slowly up the steps leading to the rude, primitive altar. The image of the Saviour stood sharply out from the cross, seeming to contemplate with stern eyes the scene that was taking place. Two wax tapers burned palely in the splendid sunshine.

Pablo was led out; his hands were bound, but his step was free, his eyes bright, his bearing proud. Kneeling before the altar, he received the communion reverently and solemnly. Then, rising, he let his eyes take in, as if in a last farewell, the sky, the earth, the distant ocean. An officer approached and asked of him if he had a last request to make.

"Yes," he responded. "Will Don Vicente take me by the hand once more?" "Certainly, with pleasure," was the answer. They conducted him to his commander, but he held up his hands to show that they were bound. At a sign from Don Vicente the cords were loosened. The two then clasped hands for the

last time. The commander's cheeks were wet with tears, but Pablo's face was almost serene. He turned and looked toward the wall, then again at Don Vicente. "Now?" he asked in a firm voice. Don Vicente inclined his head. Pablo went toward the sappers and, with a sign of the hand, bade them adieu. They themselves could not restrain their tears. Placing himself against the wall, Pablo looked about him once more, then in a loud voice himself gave the command: "Fire!"

Instantly the report was heard, and he fell to the earth. Of all the brave fellows assembled upon the plateau there were few whose eyes remained dry; in vain they endeavored to recover their *sang froid.* At last, the general, raising his voice, gave the order for the troops to defile before the dead body of their comrade. "Ah!" murmured with emotion the young Frenchman, who had witnessed the scene. "Is that really necessary?"

"Yes, my boy," answered the old general; "it must be done for the sake of discipline. But yonder in the chapel lies the body of Don Ramon, and all my officers must defile before that, that they in their turn may learn a lesson—never to give offence to one to whom they cannot also give satisfaction."

Some may deduce from the following story only another proof of the old proverb that there is honor among thieves; others that it is well to know how to cook; still others may simply sigh over the cleverness of the story, and think that it would be worth while to know how to write like Alexander Dumas, from whose French this tale was translated for ROMANCE by Mary Cruger.

THE MONKS OF OLD ST. NICHOLAS.

THE convent of St. Nicholas, designed by Contini, was built about the middle of the last century. Its rule was formerly very severe. The monks were required to dwell on Mount Etna, at the extreme of habitable height, and their convent was built three-quarters of a league above Nicolosi, which was the last village to be met with in mounting to the crater of the volcano. But as time passed the convent became seriously injured by the severe storms of that exalted region, and the monks built the new St. Nicholas on lower ground. This they used as a chapel of ease, and inhabited old St. Nicholas only in summer-time. Ultimately it fell so entirely into ruins that it was finally abandoned. Then a company of robbers took possession of it, and the good monks did not dispute its occupation with such uncomfortable neighbors.

From this circumstance resulted a curious mistake.

In 1806 the Count von Weder, a German of high repute and connections, left Vienna to visit Sicily. Embarking at Trieste, he landed at Ancona, visited Rome and Naples, and then again took ship for Sicily.

The Count von Weder had long known of the existence of the convent of St. Nicholas, and, above all, of its reputation for possessing the best cook in all Sicily. Being a great epicure, he had not failed while at Rome to procure from a cardinal, whom he met when dining with the Austrian ambassador, a letter of introduction to the superior of the convent. The letter was urgent;

presenting the count as a pious and devoted pilgrim, and asking for him the most lavish hospitality while he should remain at the convent.

The count was learned after a fashion of his own. That is to say, he had read many old-time books whose very memory had perished for want of real merit. Thus he could sustain, by volubly reciting their forgotten names, whatever erroneous or ridiculous assertions he was pleased to make, and give a sort of majestic weight to the most paradoxical views. Among these old books he had found a catalogue of all the Benedictine convents that existed on the globe. He had noted and remembered with characteristic tenacity that the rule of the Benedictines of St. Nicholas required their living, as I have said, at the limit of the cultivated regions of Mount Etna. Thus, when he engaged a mule-driver to conduct him to St. Nicholas, who asked if it was to the old or new convent he wished to go, he replied, in the few Italian words he knew, that St. Nicholas on Etna was his destination.

The mule-driver hesitated, but the count was peremptory.

"I will pay you well," he said, knowing how effectually such an argument would silence objection. The mule-driver bowed and submitted.

Thus the two travellers set out on their journey. Soon night overtook them. There was no moon, and it was so dark they could not see one step in advance. But the mule-driver knew the road thoroughly, and had no fear of losing it. Taking a half-effaced track that soon led them beyond the line of cultivation, they entered a dense forest. After an hour's slow travelling they paused in view of a black mass of buildings, whose windows showed no light.

"There is old St. Nicholas!" said the mule-driver in a low tone.

"Ah!" said the count. "This convent has a very melancholy air."

"If you wish," replied the mule-driver eagerly, "we can return to Nicolosi."

"No; it is to St. Nicholas that I am bound, not to Nicolosi."

With a muttered imprecation the Sicilian whipped up his mules and resumed the journey. In five minutes they were at the convent gate.

The convent building did not present an encouraging aspect. The crumbling stones showed the ravages of the storms and earthquakes which had assailed the mighty walls, and parts of its towers were a mass of broken ruins. The outer walls had, however, been kept in repair, and their array of loop-holes gave the building the air of a fortress rather than of a convent.

The count regarded this ambiguous-looking edifice very calmly, and ordered the mule-driver to knock. The peasant lifted the heavy iron knocker and let it fall heavily. The sound echoed through the convent, and the sharp note of a bell in the distance replied. At the next instant a small window about ten feet from the ground was opened, and the long iron tube of a gun was directed to the count's breast, while a voice demanded sharply:

"Who is there?"

"A friend," replied the count, quietly pushing aside the gun with his gloved hand.

"A friend?" asked the man at the window in suspicious accents. "Who will guarantee that?" and again he aimed his gun at the count's breast.

"My dear brother," replied the count, again putting aside the threatening weapon, "I comprehend that you need to take many precautions before admitting strangers here, and I should do likewise were I in your place. I have a letter from Cardinal Morosini for your general."

"For our captain?" asked the man with the gun.

"No! no! for the general."

"Well! it is the same thing. You are alone?"

"Entirely so."

"Wait a minute, and I will open the gate."

"Ah! that smells good," murmured the count, as the aroma of roast meat was wafted through the window.

"Your excellency has no further need of me?" said the mule-driver, who had hastily removed the count's baggage from his own mule and placed it on the ground.

"You do not wish to stay here?" asked the count.

"No!" said the mule-driver. "I prefer to sleep at home."

"Well, go then!"

"Shall I come for you again?" asked the Sicilian.

"No, the general will reconduct me."

At this moment the key began to turn in the lock. The guide sprang upon the back of one mule, snatched up the other's bridle, and hastened off at a trot. He was already at a distance of fifty paces when the gate was opened.

"That smells good!" repeated the count as the tempting odor from the kitchen again assailed his nostrils.

"Do you think so?" asked the porter. "It is the supper of our chief, who is absent. We expect him every minute now."

"Ah! I arrive at a propitious moment!" said the count, with a laugh of satisfaction.

"Do you know our chief?" asked the porter.

"No, but I have a letter for him."

"That is another thing. Let me see it."

The porter took the letter and read the address:

"To the Most Reverend General of the Benedictines, at the Convent of St. Nicholas in Catania."

"I understand!" murmured the porter.

"That is well," said the count, striking him gently on the shoulder. "Then, my friend, will you take charge of my baggage? Be careful, above all, of my portmanteau, for my purse is in it."

"Your purse? It is well to know that!" said the porter, as he took up the portmanteau carefully. "Come!" he continued. "I see you are indeed a friend. Let us enter."

The interior of the convent was not of a less strange aspect than the exterior. In every direction were ruins and detached fragments of stone; nowhere could a

crucifix or a holy image be seen. The count paused to remark upon this air of desolation to his guide.

"It is true," replied the guide. "We are so isolated here and the mountain is so full of evil folks, who fear neither God nor the devil, that we cannot leave the little we possess lying about carelessly. All our valuables are locked up in the vaults. Besides that, you know, we have another monastery in the plain below."

"No! I did not know it!" replied the count, indifferently

"Meantime, please to see that your baggage is all right," said the porter.

"That is easily done. There are one valise, one hand-bag, and the portmanteau. Be careful of this last, for my purse is in it."

"Well, wait here," the porter added, as he opened the door of a cell, and drew aside for the count to enter. "I expect our chief within half an hour at the latest."

As he was departing, the count detained him. "Tell me!" he exclaimed, anxiously. "While I am waiting, may I not go to the kitchen? I may be of service to the cook possibly."

"I see no objection to that," said the porter, "but let me first put your baggage in safety. Then I will return for you. By the bye, how much is there in your purse?"

"Three thousand six hundred and twenty ducats."

"Good!" said the porter.

"He has the air of an honest man," murmured the count, following with his eyes the retreating figure of the man, as he carried off his booty.

Ten minutes afterward his guide returned.

"You may go now to the kitchen, if you wish," he said.

The count again followed the porter, who conducted him to the convent kitchen.

The spit was turning briskly before a glowing fire, and the pots were boiling famously.

"Good!" cried the count, pausing at the entrance and taking in at one glance the inviting spectacle. "It

is evident I have not arrived on a fast-day. Good-day, cook, good-day!"

The cook had been warned, and therefore received the count with due deference. The latter ventured to lift the pot-covers to inspect their appetizing contents, and also to taste the various sauces. Suddenly, he caught from the hands of the cook a dish of eggs which he intended to make into an omelet, and to which he was about to add some salt.

"Oh! oh! what are you doing?" cried the count wildly.

"What am I doing?" repeated the astonished cook. "I am only putting salt in the omelet."

"But you must not do it!" exclaimed the count. "You may put sugar and sweetmeats or fruit, if you like."

"Not I," said the cook defiantly, as he tried to repossess himself of the dish.

"No! no!" said the count. "I will make the omelet myself. Give me the sweetmeats."

"Ah!" cried the cook, angrily. "We will see who is master here."

"I am," said a deep voice behind them. "What is the trouble?"

Both disputants turned, and beheld a man of about forty years of age, dressed in a monk's robe, who was standing in the door-way.

"The captain!" cried the cook.

"Ah!" said the count. "It is the general. Good-day, general," he continued, as he approached him. "Pardon me, but you have here a cook who does not know how to make an omelet."

"You are the Count von Weder?" asked the monk.

"Yes, general," responded the count, without letting go the dish of eggs or the fork with which he meant to beat them. "I am the Count von Weder in person."

"Then it is you who have brought the letter of introduction which the porter has given me?"

"It is."

"You are welcome, count."

The count bowed.

"I regret only," continued the monk, "that the isolated situation of our convent does not permit us to receive you in more comfort. You will pardon, I hope, the deficiencies of our table."

"Deficiencies!" echoed the count. "I assure you I find here promise of a most excellent supper, and when I have made the omelet——"

"But, captain——" interrupted the cook.

"Give the count what he needs to make the omelet his own way," said the monk.

The cook obeyed without another word.

"Now," said the monk, "make yourself entirely at home, count, and when the omelet is prepared to suit you we will have our supper."

"It is an affair of but five minutes, general. Let the rest be served," said the count, as he began zealously to beat the eggs.

In a few moments the supper was served, and the count, having triumphantly completed his dainty confection, rejoined his host in the refectory.

The superior awaited him with all the community, which was composed of twenty brothers, in a well-lighted refectory, where a perfectly-appointed table was arranged. The count was confounded by the luxurious display of silver and the priceless damask of the table-cloth and napkins. The dingy, dilapidated apartment contrasted strangely with the dainty richness of the well-covered board; the sole ornament of its walls being a complete arsenal of guns and pistols arranged picturesquely above the fireplace.

The superior remarked the count's evident surprise.

"Count," he said, smiling, "I ask you once more to pardon our rough mode of life. Perhaps you have imagined the interior of a convent to be a place of luxury and delight. So the world often judges us. When you return to it, count, I hope you will do us more justice."

"Faith, general," replied the count, "I can see no fault in your supper, even if this is all——"

"Oh! be easy on that point; we have good wine," said the superior, comprehending at once his doubt.

"What more could we desire?" said the count, with an air of great contentment.

"Still," added the superior, "our way may not seem very monastic. For instance, we do not sup without each having a pair of pistols by his side. It is a necessary precaution against the accidents that may occur in this lonely place. You will forgive us, then, that we do not, even in your presence, depart from this custom."

As he spoke, the superior drew a pair of superb pistols from his belt and placed them by his plate on the table.

"Ah! general," cried the count, "pistols are a man's best friends! I have myself a fine pair. But it is astonishing how closely yours resemble mine."

"That may well be," said the superior, suppressing a smile. "Mine came from Germany."

"Is it possible? Let me procure mine from my valise to compare them——"

"Wait till after supper, count; come, be seated. Can you say grace?"

"I knew one once, but I have somewhat forgotten it."

"So much the worse, for it is our custom to have it said by our guests. We must then leave it unsaid."

The count nodded contentedly, and enjoyed his soup just as well without the grace.

The superior then had a bottle of wine opened.

"Taste that," he said, as he handed a glass of it to the count, who examined the rich liquid amber of its hue by holding it against the light, and then drank it with the voluptuous slowness of a gourmand.

"It is wonderful!" he cried in delighted surprise. "I thought I knew all wines, but this is a Madeira of a new and most delicious bouquet."

"It is Marsala, count, which is not as well known as it deserves to be. Oh, poor Sicily! how many are thy neglected treasures!"

"Marsala!" repeated the count. "It is a good wine. I will buy some. Is it dear?"

"Two pence per bottle."

"Two pence per bottle!" repeated the count. "Why, you live in a terrestrial paradise, general! I will stay here and become a Benedictine monk."

"Thanks for the preference, count. We will gladly receive you."

"Two pence per bottle!" murmured the count as he poured out a third glassful.

"I must warn you, however, that it has a fault," added the superior. "It is very heady."

"Heady!" cried the count, contemptuously. "I could drink a pint without feeling it more than if I had swallowed a glass of currant syrup."

"Then do not constrain your taste," said the superior. "I assure you we have a plentiful supply of it."

The count profited by this permission, and set himself to eating and drinking with great gusto. The monks, not willing to be outdone by a stranger, followed his example zealously. Soon they broke the silence which had reigned at the beginning of the repast, and gradually raised their voices till a very bedlam of riotous discussion ensued. The count, with his very limited knowledge of their language, could comprehend that they related strange stories of pillaged convents, of defeated soldiery, and of the taking of great spoils. Still, he was not much astonished. In their desolation, these worthy Benedictines must often have witnessed such scenes. The Marsala flowed freely, with a fair admixture of Muscatel and Malvoisie. Strong as was the count's head, his eyes became dimmed and his tongue thickened under their insidious influence. Then amid the confused relation of tragical events were mingled bold songs on warlike themes. The count, recalling Schiller's "Song of the Brigands," sang it with an energy that won wild applause from his companions. Presently all wore an air of dreamy confusion to him. It seemed as if the monks threw aside their robes and appeared in the dress of brigands. Their grave faces were illumined by a ferocious joy, the supper became a very orgy. Still the drinking continued, and new and more heady wines were brought in. They

broke the empty bottles on the tables in demand for more, and in breaking them upset the lamps. The blaze caught the cloth, the table, and benches. In an instant all was one great bonfire, around which the monks, now become bandits, danced like demons.

Suddenly, in the midst of this infernal outcry sounded the voice of the captain, who appeared in an open door-way, and was greeted with a wild hurrah. Then four nuns were dragged in by half a dozen bandits. Shouts of joy welcomed the captives. The count seemed to behold all this as in a dream, while some superior force held him silent and motionless in his place. The bandits rushed upon their intended prey. The captain vainly sought to control them by a voice which was at once overpowered by their fierce clamor. Then it seemed to the count that the captain took the pistols which were so marvellously like his own and fired them both. He closed his eyes, dazzled by the flame; and on reopening them, saw two bandits lying on the floor in the agony of death. But he saw no more. His eyes closed again, his limbs trembled beneath him, and he sank to the ground senseless with intoxication.

When the count revived it was broad daylight. He rubbed his eyes, shook himself, and looked around him. He was lying under a tree, near Nicolosi, with Pedara on his left. He seemed to have passed the night there beneath the star-gemmed sky, with his head resting on his portmanteau. As his senses and memory slowly returned to him and he recalled all his adventures on the way to the convent and within its portals, as the fumes of the Marsala seemed to reassail his nostrils and the echoes of the mad songs and the two pistol-shots again vibrated in his ears, he looked around him in renewed perplexity. He saw his baggage in apparent completeness. He opened his portmanteau and found all its contents intact. To his great surprise his purse was still full of ducats. Opening it, he found, in addition to his gold, a little note, which read as follows:

DEAR COUNT: We make you a thousand apologies for leaving you so abruptly, but an expedition of im-

portance calls us away. We hope you will not forget the hospitality of the Benedictines of old St. Nicholas, and that when you return to Rome you will ask Monsignor Morosini to remember us poor sinners in his prayers.

You will find your baggage intact, except the pistols, which we have kept as a remembrance of you.

DON GARTANO,
Prior of old St. Nicholas.

October 16, 1806.

The count found that his property was indeed undisturbed.

When he reached Nicolosi the village was in an uproar. The convent of St. Claire had been attacked in the night, and all its treasures carried off, together with four of the youngest and prettiest nuns.

Two years afterward it was announced that the famous Gartano, chief of the brigands who occupied the ruined convent of old St. Nicholas, had been defeated and taken prisoner with many of his band by an English regiment. He was hung, to the great joy of the inhabitants of Catania, to whom he had long been a terror.

A famous preacher once took for his text the verse, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." He went on to shew that if an individual chose to be rich he could, by shutting himself up to that one object and resolutely placing pleasure and love and culture behind him, inevitably achieve his purpose. Thus, also, if a man desire fame or learning. A philosopher, in discussing this sermon afterward, remarked: "Ah, but how few are they who can want a thing so intensely as that!" The miser in the following story was one of the elect few. The origin of the tale is unknown.

THE MISER OF MARSEILLES.

MARSEILLES is a city of fountains, and has a fine aqueduct, almost entirely subterranean, by which pure water is brought from the little rivers Huveaume and Juvet. But this is not always the case. Look back with me many, many years, and I will show you how ill it used to be supplied with water, and how in the fulness of time it came to be otherwise.

Once upon a time—I know not exactly the date—there dwelt at Marseilles a man named Guyot, with his wife and one son. They were but humble people; and at the time my narrative begins the child lay sick of a fever, his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth, and his little hot hands pressed to his still hotter forehead, while he ceased not to cry in a plaintive tone for a draught of water.

"Alas! my child," said Mme. Guyot, in reply to his moaning, "you know I have told you already the cistern is empty. Not a drop of water have I in the house, and I fear all our neighbors are as badly off as ourselves. See, take a draught of milk; I have nothing else to give you."

"But, mother, it is not like water," replied the boy; "it makes me only more thirsty, and almost chokes me, it seems so thick; while water is so cold, and refreshes me for a long time. But, alas! you have none to give me. If it would but rain, for I am burning'

Oh, if I were rich, I would care little for the finest wines if I had but plenty of fresh, pure cold water!"

Mme. Guyot, with true maternal love, strove to pacify the young sufferer; and having succeeded in partially relieving his cravings by means of a draught of water which a kind neighbor, scarcely better off than herself, sent by the hand of her little daughter, he at length slept. Even in his dreams, however, the memory of his feverish longings haunted him, and his plaintive cry for water at oft-recurring intervals brought tears to the mother's eyes; and she trod softly, dreading to awaken the boy, lest by so doing she should also awaken his desires to greater activity, when she knew she was without the means of satisfying them.

Seven years later, and the fever-stricken boy had grown into a fine, thoughtful youth of sixteen. No longer dependent on his parents, the young Jacques Guyot cheerfully performed his part in gaining a living. One evening, after his return from work, as Mme. Guyot was busily engaged in placing the evening meal on the table, she said to her son: "Jacques, you must be content with less than your usual quantity of water to-night, for again the cistern is nearly dry."

"I am sorry for that, mother," replied Jacques; "but though we have often since been very scarce of water, at least we have never wanted it so badly as when I had the fever."

"Oh, Jacques, can you ever forget that?"

"Never, mother. No day passes but the torture I suffered then for a draught of water comes into my mind; and I envy no man his wealth in anything save his more abundant supply of that one good gift. Is there no way of relieving this want by which the poor of Marseilles suffer so much and so often?"

"It is just because the poor are those who suffer that they must continue to do so. Wealth might remedy the evil," answered his father.

"How so?" asked Jacques.

"Easily enough. Only let an aqueduct be constructed to bring pure water from a distant river."

"And what would that cost, think you, father?"

"More money than you could count, my son," replied the elder Guyot: "so let us to supper before it is as cold as the water you are always dreaming about."

The meal over, Jacques wandered in the garden thoughtfully and silent, but not unnoticed by his parents. They conversed together in an undertone about the extraordinary manner in which his mind dwelt on the one night of suffering from thirst so long gone by.

"It is strange," said Mme. Guyot, "how the lad is always thinking of it. I quite feared to tell him how little water we have left to-night, for it seems to grieve and trouble him so much; not for ourselves alone, but lest some unfortunate should have to bear sufferings like those he experienced seven years ago."

"Well," replied the father, "even that is not the chief object of his anxiety."

"Why, surely he does not fancy himself in love yet!" said Mme. Guyot, in an accent of alarm. "Our neighbor's daughter, Madeline, casts sheep's-eyes at him, I know, young as he is; and Jacques often tells her how like a little angel she seemed to him when her mother made her the bearer of that draught of water. But it is, doubtless, only nonsense, for he is still a boy, and she is a full year younger."

"I was not thinking of Madeline, wife," replied M. Guyot; "in my opinion, Jacques loves something else better than all the little damsels in the world—I mean money. He is always hoarding every sou he can collect, and trying by all sorts of extra services to earn more than his daily wages; and I almost fear our son will turn miser, since he spends nothing he can avoid."

"Oh, if that be the case, he is, doubtless, thinking of some girl and, trying to save against the time when he is old enough to marry; but he is a good youth," added Mme. Guyot, brushing a tear from her eye at the thought of having a rival in the love of her only child.

"Ah, wife," said her husband, "you are almost jealous of little Madeline; but, remember, you cannot expect to keep this one lamb of yours always by your side;

and I say that if the thought of having some day to provide for a wife makes the lad so saving, I for one am well content."

The return of Jacques here stopped the conversation. Hours after his parents were at rest the youth sat by the lattice in his little chamber. A luxuriant vine hung over the casement, and, waving backward and forward in the moonlight, cast fantastic shadows on the wall. Little knew the parents of Jacques by what strong feelings he was actuated, though both were in part right—the father when speaking of his almost miserly habits, the mother in believing that her son loved Madeline.

The youth possessed one of those thoughtful natures which bocome old too soon; and those who wonder at love in a boy of sixteen must remember that in southern France the blood runs warmer than in colder climates. It was indeed wonderful how he always thought of Madeline in connection with that night of feverish agony—how like a ministering angel the child had seemed in his eyes when she tripped lightly in with the cooling drink to satisfy his longing. The cup of cold water had worked with a marvellous charm, and the youth regarded the girl with a feeling akin to worship. In the eyes of others she was just a bright-eyed laughing thing, somewhat wilful and capricious at times, as girls are apt to be; but to poor Jacques she was a being of heavenly beauty.

The recent scarcity of water had again brought the old scene most vividly to his mind, and you might have seen by the moonlight how pale and agitated was his face. After a long vigil he rose, and taking from a secret repository a sum of money, he slowly counted it, and then, gazing earnestly on his treasure, said softly: "It might be done in a long lifetime; but oh, Madeline, Madeline!" Then, with tears streaming down his cheeks, he flung himself on his knees to pray. Poor Jacques! He prayed with such earnest, simple faith that he rose tranquil, and, seeking his couch, soon fell into a sound sleep.

Three or more years went by, and still Jacques continually added to his store. So scrupulous was he in denying himself every superfluity that the neighbors whispered how the young Guyot had become a miser. Some did more than whisper—they spoke openly to his mother respecting this peculiarity in her son. Mme. Guyot looked very sagacious, and gave mysterious hints about the virtue of sparing on one's self to spend on another, glancing as she spoke at Jacques and Madeline, who were just visible to the group of gossips.

Let love be the presumed cause of a man's actions, a woman will hardly ever deem him in the wrong, however extravagant they may be. So it was with the gossips at whose self-constituted tribunal Jacques was tried, and from that time many a sly joke was levelled at Madeline, till the little damsel's head was almost turned with thinking of the—of course much magnified—riches which were hoarded by her admirer for her to spend some day. She felt she was beloved, for it is not hard to divine when one is the dearest of all earthly objects to a pure and honest heart; but in spite of her convictions in this respect the conduct of Jacques was a sad puzzle to her.

"He is never so happy as when by my side," she would often say to her mother; "that any one can see; but I do not think he cares to gain me for a wife."

The mother would bid her be patient, and all would in time turn out well; but Madeline thought there should be some short answers. Still, though she evidently succeeded in giving him pain, he seemed as far from declaring his sentiments as ever.

The crisis, however, came at last. Madeline had a cousin Marie, who was not only a near neighbor, but also a sort of rival beauty. There had been no slight jealousy between the girls on the subjects of love and marriage; but Marie had at last triumphed, and the day for her own wedding being fixed, she openly twitted Madeline about her laggard lover. This was a sad blow to the vanity of the young girl. Marie's *fiancé* came from what was in those days considered to be a

great distance, and grudged neither spending time nor money in visits to his betrothed; while Madeline, with her lover almost at the door, seemed likely enough to remain single. Oh, it was too much for any maiden's patience!

The wedding-day came and she, of course, was one of the guests together with Jacques; and the girl, bent on punishing her tardy admirer, coquetted with others by his very side. But she did not stop at coquetry only. The brother of the bridegroom, a gay and handsome fellow, now at Marseilles for the first time, was smitten with her charms, and, after the wedding, found or made many excuses for visiting the town which contained Madeline. Jacques, it seemed, would not be piqued into submission, and she was not inclined either for a spinster's life or a longer silent wooing; so, after some hesitation on the part of her parents, who still leaned to their neighbor, partly from old associations and still more because of his reputed wealth, Madeline was betrothed to the stranger.

Mme. Guyot often sighed, and said in her son's hearing that it was a pity two of the prettiest maidens in Marseilles should be carried off by strangers; for she had long ago made up her mind that since Jacques would needs marry soon or late. it would be well to have a daughter-in-law whom she had known from babyhood. All her hints might have been unheard, for any outward effect they produced on her son; but when the marriage day came he remained shut up in his little chamber. Neither food nor drink passed his lips; but could he have been seen by any one, a mighty mental conflict would have been revealed to the watcher—it was the last struggle with human passion. The last bar to his devoting himself to one great object was removed.

The gossips who had aforetime interested themselves in the affairs of Jacques and Madeline once more twitted Mme. Guyot, saying that it plainly was not love that made her son such a miser in his habits; but she answered them more proudly than ever that Jacques would now look higher for a wife.

So first one great lady and then another was said to be the fair object for whom our hero cherished a secret passion and whom he was trying to equal in wealth. But though Mme. Guyot fostered the idea, she, poor soul, knew better; for only a few days after the marriage of his *one* love, Jacques had begged her, in a broken voice, to find out whether the little vessel in which Madeline had borne the precious draught of water to his bedside, a dozen long years ago, were still in existence.

"Oh, my son," said Mme. Guyot, "since you did so love Madeline why did you let her go? She would not now be the wife of a stranger if you had asked her for thyself."

"Better as it is, mother," replied Jacques, though his lip quivered while he spoke, and he again begged his mother to procure what he had mentioned, at any cost.

Mme. Guyot's mission proved successful, though the mother of Madeline marvelled greatly at the request; and both the worthy matrons agreed that the conduct of Jacques was a problem beyond their power to solve. Eagerly was the little vessel seized by him, and, after bestowing many grateful thanks on his mother, he conveyed it to his own little room. Could the thing of clay have spoken it might have told how, when others slept, Jacques spent many an hour in sighs and even tears. Ay, for every drop of water it had once held the strong man paid in tears a thousandfold.

Years sped on, and the father and mother of Jacques passed from the earth. The young man had been called a miser even during their lifetime, but now, indeed, he merited the title. Ever craving for money, he added to his store by strictest parsimony. His clothes were patched by himself, again and again, till no traces of the original stuff remained. Generally his feet were bare, and even when he wore any covering on them it consisted of old shoes which had been cast away as worthless and picked up by him in his solitary wanderings through the town. His food was of the coarsest description, and taken simply to sustain life. He no

longer occupied the dwelling in which his early days had been spent; his present home was an old and roomy house, built with a degree of strength which defied any attempt at entrance unsanctioned by the will of its occupant—at least without a degree of force being used which must inevitably have led to discovery. Here, then, dwelt Jacques Guyot quite alone. But far worse than alone was he when absent from his house, for the evil repute in which he was held was such that as he walked the little children ran shouting after him: "There goes Guyot! See the wretched miser, how thin he is! He grudges himself food to make himself fat, and clothes to cover his lean old body!" Then the mischievous urchins would cast stones at Jacques and load him with insults, unchecked by their parents. But even this was not the worst. One day he met a friend, or at least he had been such in youth, whom he had not seen for many a long year. For the moment Jacques forgot his rags and his isolation—it was so long since a kindly word had been bestowed on him, and oh, how he yearned to win it! Eagerly he advanced, with an indescribable gleam of joy lighting his pinched features; but his former comrade shrank back, holding up his hands as if to forbid his nearer approach, saying as he did so: "I will not hold communion with a thing like you. Did you not love your money better than her who ought to be your wife? But you suffered a stranger to carry her away, and now the accursed thing is dearer to you than yourself, though you have neither child nor kin to whom to leave it. Away! Touch me not!"

Another trial came still later, and it was the hardest of all. A portly dame, elderly, but still fresh and comely looking, and with a fair daughter by her side, passed leisurely along the streets of Marseilles. They seemed to be new arrivals; but the elder one was evidently no stranger, for she pointed out to her daughter various changes which had been made of late. Jacques Guyot looked earnestly at the girl, for her features brought vividly to his mind those of the object of his one love dream, and as he came near he heard her mother call

her Madeline. Another glance, and he recognized the elder female as the Madeline of his youth. Though so many years had gone over his head his pale face was in a moment flushed. Again he forgot the curses and the stones daily showered around him; the vision of the bright-eyed child, with the little treasured pitcher in her hand, was before him, and he, too, was, for an instant, young; but for how brief an instant! Madeline, even in her distant home, had heard of the miser Guyot, who heaped up wealth, though with none to share it, and denied even the smallest aid to the miserable, though surrounded with gold. Even at that moment, too, she heard the taunts of the passers-by; so, gathering her skirts closely around her, as though his very touch would poison, she swept by with such a look of scorn as rooted the miser to the spot and brought back the sense of his loneliness more terribly than ever.

Though no inhabitant of Marseilles ever entered the miser's dwelling during his life, yet I am able to tell how he spent his life there. I know he never entered his silent, comfortless home without feeling that his heart would leap with joy to hear a friendly voice, or if he might be permitted to clasp a child to his bosom. I know that, in spite of insults, reproaches, and taunts, his heart teemed with loving-kindness to his fellow-creatures; and often, when suffering from them, he would even smile and murmur: "It is because they know me not; for one day these curses will be turned to blessings."

A very old man was Jacques Guyot when the end came, and he met it with joy and hope, for he had lived long enough to finish his self-imposed task. Stretched upon the wretched pallet, he smiled and talked to himself. "Ah, Jacques," said he, "they will never more call thee accursed. The last stone has been cast at thy worthless carcass—for worthless it may be called, since even the worms will scarcely be able to banquet on the scanty covering of thy old bones. But oh, what joy to think the miser has not lived in vain! And thou, too," said he, taking in his hand Madeline's little pitcher,

"well hast thou performed thy part! Though but a thing of clay, the sight of thee has reminded me each day and hour that, having given up her to whom thou didst once belong, no greater sacrifice could be demanded of me; and more than that—it ever brought before me the memory of the one pressing want which inspired the resolution God has in his goodness given me strength to fulfil! I will indulge just one weakness, and, having taken my last draught from thee, no other lips shall touch thee!" So saying, he drank the water it contained, and, gathering all his remaining strength, shivered it to atoms. One hour after he was dead.

As soon as he was missed from his daily haunts the propriety of examining his dwelling suggested itself to the townspeople, for there were many who would not touch him while living who would gladly have acted as his executors. Fancy, then, the crowd around the door—the breaking open of the house—the curious ransacking of each room, till they at last stood beside all that remained of the object of their bitter loathing. The authorities of the town, who led the way, took possession of a sealed paper which Jacques, ere he lay down to die, had placed in a conspicuous position. It was his will, duly executed, and contained these words: "Having observed from my youth that the poor of Marseilles are ill supplied with water, which can be procured for them only at great cost, I have cheerfully labored all my life to gain them this great blessing, and I bequeath all I possess to be spent in building an aqueduct for their use."

Jacques had told the truth. The curses turned into blessings and his death made a city full of self-reproaching mourners. Many a man has won the name of a hero by one gallant deed; but he who made a conquest of a city by the continued heroism of a long life methinks deserves the name indeed. And thus I have told you to whom the inhabitants of Marseilles owe their aqueduct.

There is a profound moral to this simple but powerful little sketch. In the case of the "intrepid hunter of Opreno," his misery took the shape of a red raven. To every criminal his crimes assume some haunting form. Perhaps that of a red raven is as endurable as any of them. This story was translated from the Italian by Harriette Billings for ROMANCE.

THE RED RAVEN.

ON the night of the Nativity a bloody crime was committed at Caperno. Mastro Lanza, a worthy man about fifty years old, who, two months before, had returned from America with a goodly heap of gold, was killed by an unknown hand. Profound consternation, aggravated by fantastic fear, reigned throughout the country. When would the assassin be discovered?

The *gens-d'armes*, after scouring the country for a week, grew weary of the useless labor—no trace, no clew.

The grave where Mastro Lanza lay buried was covered with a fall of snow, and the grave-digger, after planting over it a rough cross, had chanted this lugubrious antiphon: "Frozen is thy bed, poor Mastro; but the ruffian who cut thy throat in order to possess himself of thy dollars will pass the winter joyously before a hearth crowned with bottles!"

As the grave-digger turned his back on the cross and went his way out of the inclosure, a hoarse, guttural sound issued from the silent gloom of the twilight.

"The devil is laughing!" exclaimed the servant of the dead, closing the gate. "The *gens-d'armes* will lose their time."

From the peaks of Albenza to the valleys of Soma the earth was white—the streets were deserted. A few dimly-lighted windows disclosed something of life in the human beings huddled together in frosty huts. The whiteness of the snow seemed dark as twilight poured over it its luminous brightness.

A man, wrapped from nose to knees in a thick cloak,

climbed the steep road that led from the valley of Soma to Caperno. He was going to Opreno. The distance that still lay before him was long—night threatened to overtake him on his way. And this man—young, healthy, vigorous—was afraid of the night.

Coming from Pontida on his way home to his own mountainous country, he had taken the shortest route, which, besides being the shortest, also enabled him to avoid inhabited places. He climbed the steep hill with hurried steps, like a belated traveller who is in haste to reach his destination.

On, on he went. The hill overcome, he stopped an instant, as if at sight of an obstacle or at the sound of a threat. What had he seen? What heard?

He had seen the white wall of the cemetery—had heard the hoarse croak of the raven.

Oh, it is yet to be seen that Nardo dei Brizzi, the intrepid hunter of the valley, is afraid of the dead.

And the man in the cloak, shaking off his terror, took up his march with a quick step, that he might leave as quickly as possible a painful situation.

Arrived before the cemetery, he turned his face from it and drew back, skirting the wall at the left. As soon as he seemed sufficiently removed from the abode of the dead he stopped, wiped away the perspiration which rolled down his face, and, casting a backward glance over the road already traversed, saw on the white carpet of snow—hopping after him, running directly toward him—a small body, whose form, outlined on the deep snow, appeared that of a raven with red plumage. "Another raven!" cried Brizzi, with chattering teeth. "Mastro's was black. Who ever saw one of these cursed birds with feathers the color of blood?"

The red raven had stopped in the middle of the road, and seemed to be waiting for the man to take up his march again, in order that he might resume his play of running after him.

Il Brizzi threw aside his cloak, picked up a handful of snow from the ground, made it in a ball and, taking aim, threw it with an oath straight at the bird.

The bird jumped aside to avoid the projectile, croaked three times in a mocking tone, then, hopping along on its two straight nodulous claws, advanced toward the hunter with the petulant manner of one who has received a challenge.

"Why have I not my good gun with me?" thought the mountaineer, grinding his teeth. And, burrowing his head deep in the folds of his cloak, he went hastily on his way up the hill like a frightened child.

The raven followed him, beating his wings, and that noise of fluttering feathers, penetrating the big hood that enveloped the head of the fleeing man, pierced his ears and froze his blood.

In the dense obscurity of the night, damp with perspiration, Nardo Brizzi at last arrived at Opreno.

With convulsive haste he opened the door of an old hut, entered, closed it, then, having lighted a lantern, threw its rays through the little yard to make sure that the other had not entered.

The other! A tiny bird that in the excited mind of that mighty hunter had taken on the proportions of a gigantic soldier!

No; the raven had not entered. The hunter breathed again and smiled, shaking his head. How did that filthy graveyard bird ever arouse such fear in Nardo Brizzi?

He opened a bottle, emptied it in a breath, and went into the next room to lie down.

But scarcely had he laid himself on the bed, scarcely had he extinguished the candle which he had placed on a chair beside him—

"Chek! chek!"

"The devil!"

"Chek! chek! chek!"

And the pecking of a sharp beak on the window post made the miserable fellow, who had for the moment regained his courage with wine, burrow his head between the counterpane and the pillows.

"Again! Again! *Him!*"

The red raven was there, leaning against the window

ledge—picking, picking at the frame, and every blow of that furious, biting beak pierced the very vitals of Nardo and inflicted a quivering wound.

That was a long night for the hunter of Opreno! How many times in order to make an end to his atrocious suffering did he think to bound from his bed, open the window, seize that accursed bird by the neck and strangle him!

Morning came. As the first glimmer of light penetrated the room he leaped from his bed—resolute, angry, feverish.

With a blow and a salvo of oaths he opened the window.

But the raven was no longer there. It had divined his intentions and had gone, taking refuge in a path of the garden.

"Ah! Do you think I cannot reach you, damned beast? Wait a moment and I will settle your account!"

He seized a gun—leaped down the stair—was in the garden.

Nardo took aim, fired, the ball sped.

The raven, in no wise frightened, hopping, peering, scolding, came up to him and stopped a few steps away from the gun that was still pointed at him.

The second charge exploded.

"I have finally blown you to atoms, oh, accursed bird!" howled Nardo, plunging eagerly into the smoke of the powder.

But the raven, from the branch of a tree where he had taken refuge, answered with a croak, and, coming close to the man who had twice tried to kill him, planted his claws in his eyes and pressed his face between his bleeding wings.

The man let fall his gun—fell—rolled howling in the snow.

The assassin of Mastro Lanza had attempted an impossibility—he had tried to kill the consciousness of his crime.

The world forgets all but its greatest men. A single generation is enough to dim the recollection of all but the most prominent characteristics even of them. Thus to the vast majority the name of Poe is associated only with the gloom and weirdness of his poems and best-known stories. It is partly for the purpose of recalling to the public mind that this many-sided genius possessed a vein of whimsical drollery that ROMANCE presents this amusing description of what art had done for the hero of a mysterious battle. The story is reprinted, with the permission of A. C. Armstrong & Son from their edition of Poe's works.

THE MAN THAT WAS USED UP.

Pleurez, pleurez, mes yeux, et fondez vous en eau!
La moitie de ma vie a mis l'autre au tombeau.—CORNEILLE.

I CANNOT just now remember when or where I first made the acquaintance of that truly fine-looking fellow, Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith. Some one *did* introduce me to the gentleman, I am sure—at some public meeting, I know very well, held about something of great importance, no doubt, at some place or other, I feel convinced, whose name I have unaccountably forgotten. The truth is that the introduction was attended, upon my part, with a degree of anxious embarrassment which operated to prevent any definite impressions of either time or place. I am constitutionally nervous; this, with me, is a family failing, and I can't help it. In especial, the slightest appearance of mystery—of any point I cannot exactly comprehend—puts me at once into a pitiable state of agitation.

There was something, as it were, remarkable—yes, *remarkable*, although this is but a feeble term to express my full meaning—about the entire individuality of the personage in question. He was, perhaps, six feet in height, and of a presence singularly commanding. There was an *air distingué* pervading the whole man which spoke of high breeding and hinted at high birth. Upon this topic—the topic of Smith's personal appearance—I have a kind of melancholy satisfaction in being

minute. His head of hair would have done honor to a Brutus; nothing could be more richly flowing or possess a brighter gloss. It was of a jetty black; which was also the color, or more properly the no color, of his unimaginable whiskers. You perceive I cannot speak of these latter without enthusiasm; it is not too much to say that they were the handsomest pair of whiskers under the sun. At all events, they encircled, and at times partially overshadowed, a mouth utterly unequalled. Here were the most entirely even and the most brilliantly white of all conceivable teeth. From between them, upon every proper occasion, issued a voice of surpassing clearness, melody, and strength. In the matter of eyes, also, my acquaintance was pre-eminently endowed. Either one of such a pair was worth a couple of the ordinary ocular organs. They were of a deep hazel, exceedingly large and lustrous; and there was perceptible about them, ever and anon, just that amount of interesting obliquity which gives pregnancy to expression.

The bust of the general was unquestionably the finest bust I ever saw. For your life you could not have found a fault with its wonderful proportion. This rare peculiarity set off to great advantage a pair of shoulders which would have called up a blush of conscious inferiority into the countenance of the marble Apollo. I have a passion for fine shoulders, and may say that I never beheld them in perfection before. The arms altogether were admirably modelled. Nor were the lower limbs less superb. These were, indeed, the *ne plus ultra* of good legs. Every connoisseur in such matters admitted the legs to be good. There was neither too much flesh nor too little—neither rudeness nor fragility. I could not imagine a more graceful curve than that of the *os femoris*, and there was just that due gentle prominence in the rear of the *fibula* which goes to the conformation of a properly proportioned calf. I wish to God my young and talented friend Chiponchipino, the sculptor, had but seen the legs of Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith.

But although men so absolutely fine-looking are neither as plenty as reasons or blackberries, still I could not bring myself to believe that *the remarkable* something to which I alluded just now—that the odd air of *je ne sais quoi* which hung about my new acquaintance—lay altogether, or indeed at all, in the supreme excellence of his bodily endowments. Perhaps it might be traced to the *manner;* yet here again I could not pretend to be positive. There *was* a primness, not to say stiffness, in his carriage—a degree of measured and, if I may so express it, of rectangular precision attending his every movement, which, observed in a more diminutive figure, would have had the least little savor in the world of affectation, pomposity or constraint, but which, noticed in a gentleman of his undoubted dimensions, was readily placed to the account of reserve, *hauteur*, of a commendable sense, in short, of what is due to the dignity of colossal proportion.

The kind friend who presented me to General Smith whispered in my ear some few words of comment upon the man. He was a *remarkable* man; a *very* remarkable man; indeed, one of the *most* remarkable men of the age.

He was an especial favorite, too, with the ladies, chiefly on account of his reputation for courage.

"In *that* point he is unrivalled—indeed, he is a perfect desperado, a downright fire-eater, and no mistake," said my friend, here dropping his voice excessively low, and thrilling me with the mystery of his tone. "A downright fire-eater, and *no* mistake. Showed *that*, I should say, to some purpose in the late tremendous swamp-fight, away down South, with the Bugaboo and Kickapoo Indians." (Here my friend opened his eyes to some extent.) "Bless my soul! Blood and thunder, and all—that! *Prodigies* of valor! Heard of him, of course?—you know he's the man——"

"Man alive, how *do* you do? Why, how *are* ye? *Very* glad to see ye, indeed!" here interrupted the general himself, seizing my companion by the hand as he drew near, and bowing stiffly but profoundly as I was presented. I then thought (and I think so still) that I

never heard a clearer nor a stronger voice, nor beheld a finer set of teeth; but I *must* say that I was sorry for the interruption just at that moment, as, owing to the whispers and insinuations aforesaid, my interest had been greatly excited in the hero of the Bugaboo and Kickapoo campaign.

However, the delightfully luminous conversation of Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith soon completely dissipated this chagrin. My friend leaving us immediately, we had quite a long *tête-à-tête*, and I was not only pleased, but *really* instructed. I never heard a more fluent talker, or a man of greater general information. With becoming modesty he forebore, nevertheless, to touch upon the theme I had just then most at heart—I mean the mysterious circumstances attending the Bugaboo war—and, on my own part, what I conceive to be a proper sense of delicacy forbade me to broach the subject; although, in truth, I was exceedingly tempted to do so. I perceived, too, that the gallant soldier preferred topics of philosophical interest, and that he delighted especially in commenting upon the rapid march of mechanical invention. Indeed, lead him where I would, this was a point to which he invariably came back.

"There is nothing at all like it," he would say. "We are a wonderful people, and live in a wonderful age. Parachutes and railroads, man-traps and spring-guns! Our steam-boats are upon every sea, and the Nassau balloon packet is about to run regular trips (fare either way only twenty pounds sterling) between London and Timbuctoo. And who shall calculate the immense influence upon social life, upon arts, upon commerce, upon literature, which will be the immediate result of the great principles of electro-magnetics! Nor is this all, let me assure you. There is really no end to the march of invention. The most wonderful, the most ingenious, and, let me add, Mr.—Mr.—Thompson, I believe, is your name—let me add, I say, the most *useful*—the most truly *useful*—mechanical contrivances are daily springing up like mushrooms, if I may so express

myself—or, more figuratively, like—ah—grasshoppers —like grasshoppers, Mr. Thompson—about us, ah—ah —ah—around us!"

Thompson, to be sure, is not my name, but it is needless to say that I left General Smith with a heightened interest in the man, with an exalted opinion of his conversational powers, and a deep sense of the valuable privileges we enjoy in living in this age of mechanical invention. My curiosity, however, had not been altogether satisfied, and I resolved to prosecute immediate inquiry among my acquaintances touching the brevet brigadier-general himself, and particularly respecting the tremendous events *quorum pars magna fuit*, during the Bugaboo and Kickapoo campaign.

The first opportunity which presented itself, and which (*herresco referens*) I did not in the least scruple to seize, occurred at the church of the Reverend Doctor Drummummupp, where I found myself established, one Sunday, just at sermon time, not only in the pew, but by the side of that worthy and communicative little friend of mine, Miss Tabitha T. Thus seated, I congratulated myself, and with much reason, upon the very flattering state of affairs. If any person knew anything about Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith, that person, it was clear to me, was Miss Tabitha T. We telegraphed a few signals and then commenced, *sotto voce*, a brisk *tête-à-tête*. .

"Smith!" said she, in reply to my very earnest inquiry. "Smith—why, not General A. B. C.? Bless me, I thought you *knew* all about *him!* This is a wonderfully inventive age! Horrid affair that—a bloody set of wretches, those Kickapoos. Fought like a hero—prodigies of valor—immortal renown. Smith—Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C.—why, you know, he's the man——"

"Man," here broke in Doctor Drummummupp, at the top of his voice, and with a thump that came near knocking the pulpit about our ears, "man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower!" I started to the ex-

tremity of the pew, and perceived by the animated looks of the divine that the wrath which had nearly proved fatal to the pulpit had been excited by the whispers of the lady and myself. There was no help for it; so I submitted with a good grace, and listened, in all the martyrdom of dignified silence, to the balance of that very capital discourse.

Next evening found me a somewhat late visitor at the Rantipole Theatre, where I felt sure of satisfying my curiosity at once by merely stepping into the box of those exquisite specimens of affability and omniscience, the Misses Arabella and Miranda Cognoscenti. That fine tragedian, Climax, was doing Iago to a very crowded house, and I experienced some little difficulty in making my wishes understood; especially as our box was next the slips and completel yoverlooked the stage.

"Smith!" said Miss Arabella, as she at length comprehended the purport of my query. "Smith! Why, not General John A. B. C.?"

"Smith?" inquired Miranda, musingly. "God bless me, did you ever behold a finer figure?"

"Never, madam, but *do* tell me——"

"Or so inimitable grace?"

"Never, upon my word! But, pray, inform me——"

"Or so just an appreciation of stage effect?"

"Madam!"

"Or a more delicate sense of the true beauties of Shakespeare? Be so good as to look at that leg!"

"The devil!" and I turned again to her sister.

"Smith!" said she. "Why, not General John A. B. C.? Horrid affair that, wasn't it?—great wretches, those Bugaboos—savage and so on—but we live in a wonderfully inventive age—Smith!—oh, yes—great man!—perfect desperado!—immortal renown!—prodigies of valor! *Never heard!*" (This was given in a scream.) "Bless my soul!—why, he's the man——"

"—— mandragora
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday!"

here roared out Climax just in my ear, and shaking his fist in my face all the time in a way that I *couldn't* stand and I *wouldn't*. I left the Misses Cognoscenti immediately, went behind the scenes forthwith, and gave the beggarly scoundrel such a thrashing as I trust he will remember till the day of his death.

At the *soirée* of the lovely widow, Mrs. Kathleen O'Trump, I was confident that I should meet with no similar disappointment. Accordingly, I was no sooner seated at the card-table, with my pretty hostess for a *vis-à-vis*, than I propounded those questions the solution of which had become a matter so essential to my peace.

"Smith!" said my partner. "Why, not General John A. B. C.? Horrid affair that, wasn't it?—diamonds, did you say?—terrible wretches, those Kickapoos!—we are playing *whist*, if you please, Mr. Tattle; however, this is the age of invention, most certainly *the* age, one may say—*the* age *par excellence*—speak French?—oh, quite a hero—perfect desperado!—*no hearts*, Mr. Tattle? I don't believe it—immortal renown and all that!—prodigies of valor! *Never heard!* why, bless me, he's the man——"

"Mann!—*Captain* Mann!" here screamed some little feminine interloper from the farthest corner of the room. "Are you talking about Captain Mann and the duel?—go on!" And go on Mrs. O'Trump did—all about a certain Captain Mann, who was either shot or hanged, or should have been both shot and hanged. Yes! Mrs. O'Trump, she went on, and I—I went off. There was no chance of hearing anything further that evening in regard to Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith.

Still, I consoled myself with the reflection that the tide of ill-luck would not run against me forever, and so determined to make a bold push for information at the rout of that bewitching little angel, the graceful Mrs. Pirouette.

"Smith!" said Mrs. P., as we twirled about together in a *pas de zephyr*. "Smith!—why, not General John A. B. C.? Dreadful business, that of the Bugaboos, wasn't

it?—dreadful creatures, those Indians!—*do* turn out your toes! I really am ashamed of you—man of great courage, poor fellow!—but this is a wonderful age for invention—oh, dear me, I'm out of breath—quite a desperado—prodigies of valor—*never heard!*—can't believe it—I shall have to sit down and enlighten you—Smith! why, he's the man——"

"Man-*Fred*, I tell you!" here bawled out Miss Bas-Bleu, as I led Mrs. Pirouette to a seat. "Did ever anybody hear the like? It's Man-*Fred*, I say, and not at all by any means Man-*Friday*." Here Miss Bas-Bleu beckoned to me in a very peremptory manner; and I was obliged, will I nill I, to leave Mrs. P. for the purpose of deciding a dispute touching the title of a certain poetical drama of Lord Byron's. Although I pronounced, with great promptness, that the true title was Man-*Friday*, and not by any means Man-*Fred*, yet when I returned to seek Mrs. Pirouette she was not to be discovered, and I made my retreat from the house in a very bitter spirit of animosity against the whole race of the Bas-Bleus.

Matters had now assumed a really serious aspect, and I resolved to call at once upon my particular friend, Mr. Theodore Sinivate; for I knew that here at least I should get something like definite information.

"Smith!" said he, in his well-known peculiar way of drawling out his syllables. "Smith!—why, not General John A. B. C.? Savage affair that with the Kicka-po-o-o-os, wasn't it? Say, don't you think so?—perfect despera-a-ado—great pity, 'pon my honor! wonderfully inventive age! pro-o-odigies of valor! By the bye, did you ever hear about Captain Ma-a-a-a-n?"

"Captain Mann be d——d!" said I. "Please to go on with your story."

"Hem! oh, well! quite *la même cho-o-ose*, as we say in France. Smith, eh? Brigadier-General John A—B—C.? I say"—(here Mr. S. thought proper to put his finger to the side of his nose)—"I say, you don't mean to insinuate now, really and truly, and conscientiously, that you don't know all about that affair of Smith's, as

well as I do, eh? Smith? John A—B—C.? Why, bless me, he's the ma-a-an——"

"*Mr.* Sinivate," said I, imploringly, "*is* he the man in the mask?"

"No-o-o!" said he, looking wise, "nor the man in the mo-o-on."

This reply I considered a pointed and positive insult, and so left the house at once in high dudgeon, with a firm resolve to call my friend Mr. Sinivate to a speedy account for his ungentlemanly conduct and ill-breeding.

In the mean time, however, I had no notion of being thwarted touching the information I desired. There was one resource left me yet. I would go to the fountain-head. I would call forthwith upon the general himself, and demand, in explicit terms, a solution of this abominable piece of mystery. Here, at least, there should be no chance for equivocation. I would be plain, positive, peremptory—as short as pie-crust—as concise as Tacitus or Montesquieu.

It was early when I called, and the general was dressing, but I pleaded urgent business, and I was shown at once into his bedroom by an old negro valet, who remained in attendance during my visit. As I entered the chamber I looked about, of course, for the occupant, but did not immediately perceive him. There was a large and exceedingly odd-looking bundle of something which lay close by my feet on the floor, and, as I was not in the best humor in the world, I gave it a kick out of the way.

"Hem! Ahem! Rather civil that, I should say!" said the bundle, in one of the smallest and altogether the funniest little voices, between a squeak and a whistle, that I ever heard in all the days of my existence.

"Ahem! Rather civil that, I should observe."

I fairly shouted with terror, and made off, at a tangent, into the farthest extremity of the room.

"God bless me, my dear fellow," here again whistled the bundle, "what—what—what—why, what *is* the matter? I really believe you don't know me at all."

What *could* I say to all this—what *could* I? I staggered into an arm-chair, and, with staring eyes and open mouth, awaited the solution of the wonder.

"Strange you shouldn't know me, though, isn't it?" presently resqueaked the nondescript, which I now perceived was performing upon the floor some inexplicable evolution, very analogous to the drawing on of a stocking. There was only a single leg, however, apparent.

"Strange you shouldn't know me, though, isn't it? Pompey, bring me that leg!" Here Pompey handed the bundle a very capital cork leg, already dressed, which it screwed on in a trice; and then it stood up before my eyes.

"And a bloody action it *was*," continued the thing, as if in a soliloquy; "but then one mustn't fight with the Bugaboos and Kickapoos and think of coming off with a mere scratch. Pompey, I'll thank you now for that arm. Thomas" (turning to me) "is decidedly the best hand at a cork leg; but if you should ever want an arm, my dear fellow, you must let me recommend you to Bishop." Here Pompey screwed on an arm.

"We had rather hot work of it, that you may say. Now, you dog, slip on my shoulders and bosom. Pettit makes the best shoulders, but for a bosom you will have to go to Ducrow."

"Bosom!" said I.

"Pompey, will you *never* be ready with that wig? Scalping is a rough process, after all; but then you can procure such a capital scratch at De l'Orme's."

"Scratch!"

"Now, you nigger, my teeth! For a *good* set of these you had better go to Parmly's at once; high prices, but excellent work. I swallowed some very capital articles, though, when the big Bugaboo rammed me down with the butt end of his rifle."

"Butt end! Ram down! My eye!!"

"Oh, yes, by the bye, my eye—here, Pompey, you scamp, screw it in! Those Kickapoos are not so very slow at a gouge; but he's a belied man, that Dr. Will-

iams, after all; you can't imagine how well I see with the eyes of his make."

I now began very clearly to perceive that the object before me was nothing more nor less than my new acquaintance, Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith. The manipulations of Pompey had made, I must confess, a very striking difference in the personal appearance of the man. The voice, however, still puzzled me no little; but even this apparent mystery was speedily cleared up.

"Pompey, you black rascal," squeaked the general, "I really do believe you would let me go out without my palate."

Hereupon the negro, grumbling out an apology, went up to his master, opened his mouth with the knowing air of a horse-jockey, and adjusted therein a somewhat singular-looking machine in a very dexterous manner that I could not altogether comprehend. The alteration, however, in the entire expression of the general's countenance was instantaneous and surprising. When he again spoke his voice had resumed all that rich melody and strength which I had noticed upon our original introduction.

"D——n the vagabonds!" said he, in so clear a tone that I positively started at the change. "D——n the vagabonds! They not only knocked in the roof of my mouth, but took the trouble to cut off at least seven-eighths of my tongue. There isn't Bonfanti's equal, however, in America, for really good articles of this description. I can recommend you to him with confidence" (here the general bowed), "and assure you that I have the greatest pleasure in so doing."

I acknowledged his kindness in my best manner, and took leave of him at once, with a perfect understanding of the true state of affairs—with a full comprehension of the mystery which had troubled me so long. It was evident. It was a clear case. Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith was the man—was *the man that was used up.*

ROMANCE.

Vol. V. MARCH, 1892. No. 2.

CONTENTS.

VASSILISSA . . . . . *Ivan Tourgueneff*
An old lieutenant's plebeian love.

COYOTE-THAT-BITES . . . . *Frank B. Millard*
In which strong drink serves a good purpose.

A LAWYER'S STORY . . . . . *Harry Howard*
Illustrating a disadvantage of large hands.

THE LAUREL-WREATH . . . . . *Paul Arène*
Which might as well have been of garlic.

"HIGHNESS" AND "MAJESTY" . . . *Moritz Tokai*
A tale of the Inquisition.

THE COLONEL'S WIFE . . . . . *Countess Lara*
There was but one man who resisted her.

THE DEAD HAND . . . . *James Young Simpson*
Which, however, moved.

'LIZA . . . . . *Ludgate Monthly*
The story of a very white lie.

THE ANTE-MORTEM STATEMENT . . *Rose A. Lester*
Which changed the whole case.

ON THE CLIFF . . . . . *Tinsley's Magazine*
It was a romantic cliff, as usual.

A HARDWORKED FIREMAN . . . . *Anonymous*
But he bore his lot heroically.

DIREXIA . . . . . *H. L. Sargent*
A woman of unquenchable ambition.

A DUEL WITH RAZORS . . . . . *Ernest L'Epine*
Which hurt nobody.

TOM ROCKET . . . . . *London Once a Week*
A good old-fashioned highwayman.

THE REVERSED VERDICT . . . . *Detroit News*
Everybody approved the reversal.

A STRANGE GUIDE . . . . . *G. Giacosa*
He was a pretty good one, after all.

THE NOTORIOUS MISS ANSTRUTHER . *E. W. Hornung*
A biter who was bit.

A SAGACIOUS ORDERLY . . . . . *Anonymous*
No one thought a prison too hard for him.

Some one has said that to outside nations the vast empire of Russia seems a collection of beings as monotonously similar as its mighty steppes, until the genius-tipped pen of a Tourgueneff or a Tolstoï outlines some individual Russian life for us. Then from seeming characterless and uninteresting, each one becomes an irregular polygon, full of fascinating and unexpected angles. That the Russians suffer like other nations from the pangs of unrequited love, Tourgueneff shows us vividly in the following half-humorous, half-pathetic story, which was translated for the Baltimore *American* by Mrs. Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, and has been abridged for ROMANCE.

VASSILISSA.

IN 182— there lived at B——, a little town in Southern Russia, one Ivan Afanacievitch Petouchkof, lieutenant in a certain regiment in the garrison. It may be well that foreign readers should understand that in social life in Russia the family name is very rarely used. A man is Michael Alexandrovitch for example; that is, Michael, the son of Alexander. If you desire to know *what* Michael, son of Alexander, the surname is then given. In like manner, a woman will be Agrippina Ivanovna; that is, Agrippina, daughter of Ivan, her maiden or married surname being rarely mentioned.

This man, therefore, was Ivan, son of Athanasius. His parents had been poor people and left him an orphan when he was five years old. Falling into the hands of a dishonest guardian, who completely despoiled him of what little property he inherited, he was early thrown upon his own resources.

He was a man of middle height, somewhat round-shouldered; had a thin face, covered with red pimples; pretty regular features; brown hair; gray eyes; a downcast look; and a low and wrinkled forehead. Having led a very regular life, he retained, even at forty, the shyness and inexperience of a child, shunned new acquaintances and was always indulgent to those placed under his authority.

Men whose fate has bound them to lives of loneliness and monotony commonly have "whimsies." Petouchkof liked to eat every morning for his breakfast, hot out of the oven, a round white loaf called a *boulka*, and in course of time this delicacy became indispensable to his comfort. One morning his servant, Onesimus, brought him, instead of the *boulka*, three wretched overbaked cracknels on a breakfast-plate with a pattern of little blue flowers. Petouchkof asked at once, in a tone of righteous indignation, what he meant by it.

"All the *boulkas* are gone," replied Onesimus, a native of St. Petersburg, whom chance had domiciled in Southern Russia.

"Impossible!" cried Ivan, son of Athanasius.

"There is not one left," reiterated Onesimus. "The chief nobleman of the city gives a great breakfast this morning and they have all gone to him—as they ought."

Ivan, son of Athanasius, paced up and down his bedroom for a little while. Then he dressed himself and walked towards the bakery. It was the only establishment of the kind in the town of B——. It had been set up ten years before by a German, whose widow continued the business with much success.

Petouchkof tapped at the window. A fat woman showed herself behind the blinds with a sleepy face.

"I should like to have a *boulka*," said Petouchkof, very politely.

"I have not got any," replied the fat woman, querulously.

"You haven't any?"

"Not one."

"That's very odd! Don't you know I always get a *boulka* for my breakfast? And I pay punctually."

The baker's widow looked at him and answered nothing. At last she said: "Take a couple of rolls or a *papluka* (a sort of cake made of light pie-crust)."

As she spoke she yawned and made the sign of the cross over her mouth.

"I don't want rolls or short cake," said Petouchkof in an injured tone.

"Just as you please," answered the fat woman, and closed the window blinds.

Ivan, the son of Athanasius, felt himself an injured man. Not knowing how to help himself, however, he crossed the street, pouting like a spoilt child.

"Monsieur!" cried a sweet and pleasant voice. "Monsieur!"

Ivan, the son of Athanasius, raised his eyes and saw through the blinds of the bakery a young girl of about seventeen, holding a *boulka* in her hand. She had a round, full face, pink cheeks, little brown eyes, a slightly turned up nose, abundant light brown hair and splendid shoulders. The impression left by her appearance was that she was a good-natured, untidy, indolent girl.

"Take it, Monsieur. It's a *boulka*," she said laughing. "I saved it for myself. But I will give it to you. Take it."

"Thank you very much. Allow me——" Petouchkof began to feel in his pockets.

"Never mind! Never mind! I give it you with pleasure." And she closed the shutters.

Petouchkof went home very much pleased.

"There! *You* could not find a *boulka*, but *I* got one!" he said to his servant, Onesimus.

That evening Ivan, the son of Athanasius, said as he was undressing to go to bed (speaking to his servant after the Russian fashion): "Brother, who was the girl I saw to-day at the German bakery?"

"What do you want to know for?" growled Onesimus.

"Well, I just asked," replied the Lieutenant, pulling off his boots without any assistance from his servant.

"She is a tolerably good-looking girl," said Onesimus at last.

"Yes; not bad looking," said Ivan, the son of Athanasius, now in bed, looking askance out of the bedclothes. "What do they call her?"

"Vassilissa."

"Do you know her?"

"Yes," replied Onesimus after a moment's reflection.

Petouchkof opened his mouth as if about to speak; but he shut it up again, turned over on his side and went to sleep. Onesimus passed into the ante-chamber, took a pinch of snuff and nodded his head knowingly.

Next morning Petouchkof made ready early to go out. Onesimus brought him the frock coat he commonly wore. It was old, threadbare, of a faded green, and adorned by an immense pair of epaulettes, tarnished with age and wear. Petouchkof looked fixedly at Onesimus for some moments and then asked for his new coat. Onesimus obeyed, but the order seemed to surprise him. Petouchkof finished his dressing and drew on his buckskin gauntlets with particular care.

"Never mind, brother," he said to Onesimus, "about going this morning after the *boulka*. I will go myself; it is all in my way."

"All right!" answered Onesimus roughly, as if he had had a poke in the ribs.

So Petouchkof went to the bakery and tapped at the window. The fat woman opened it.

"Have the goodness to give me a *boulka*," said the Lieutenant politely.

The mistress of the bakery poked between the bars a stout arm bare to the shoulder and thrust a smoking hot *boulka* almost under the very nose of Petouchkof.

That personage stood for a few moments in the street outside the window, walked slowly past the door, looked into the yard, and then, ashamed of his own disappointment, walked home with the *boulka* in his hand. All the rest of that day he felt uneasy and uncomfortable, and at night he had no conversation with Onesimus, which was very unusual with him.

The next morning Onesimus went to the bakery to get the *boulka* as before.

Several weeks passed, the Lieutenant had almost forgotten Vassilissa and had resumed his confidential intercourse with his servant, when one day in his walks he again found himself before the German bakery. A queer smile lighted up his countenance.

Just then a side door opened, and Vassilissa ran out into the street, with a short cloak thrown over her shoulders, and a yellow handkerchief on her head. Petouchkof hastened to accost her. "Where are you going, my little dove?" he said.

Vassilissa looked at him and began to laugh, turning away her head and covering her mouth with her sleeve.

"I dare say you are going out for a little shopping," resumed Petouchkof with a smile.

"How curious we are!" replied Vassilissa.

"No, not a bit," added Petouchkof, waving his hands deprecatingly. "On the contrary—that is, in general, you know—I—" Here he stopped short as if he had clearly expressed himself.

"Did you eat my little *boulka?*"

"Yes, indeed;" he replied, "with the greatest of pleasure."

Vassilissa trotted along the pavement.

"It is a lovely day," said Petouchkof, beside her. "Are you fond of walking?"

"Yes, very."

"How I should like it, if——"

"Like what?" said Vassilissa, in those ringing tones peculiar to young Russian girls, which are something like the early morning notes of the partridge.

"If I might be allowed to walk with you—out of town, for instance——"

"Impossible!"

"But, why?"

"How foolish you are!"

"Allow me——"

He stopped to let a young shop-keeper pass by them, a young man with a pointed beard, wearing a long blue tunic, the sleeves of which were held together between his fingers; and a fur cap shaped like a water-melon. He looked at Vassilissa in some surprise. As soon as this interruption permitted, Petouchkof was again at Vassilissa's side.

"I renew my proposition," he said.

Vassilissa looked at him archly and began to laugh.

Then she passed her hand over her hair to feel if it was smooth and walked more slowly. Ivan, the son of Athanasius, smiled, and, though he was frightened to death at doing it, tried to put his arm round the waist of the young girl.

She gave a little cry. "For shame, sir. In the street!"

"Ah, bah! let me, let me!" stammered Petouchkof.

Vassilissa stopped and said severely: "Go on, Monsieur. There lies your road."

Petouchkof obeyed her. He returned home, and sat down in his room for at least an hour without lighting his pipe. Then he took a sheet of foolscap paper, mended a pen, and, after much cogitation, wrote the following letter:

Dear Mademoiselle Vassilissa, daughter of Timothy—Being naturally a quiet man, I can hardly realize how I came to cause you any annoyance. If you think me guilty, I can only say it was due to some late jibes on the part of my brother officers. The rudeness of which you may complain was quite contrary to my usual habits. I beseech you to forgive me. I am deeply touched by your kindness and very grateful to you. Do not be offended with me, Vassilissa, daughter of Timothy. I remain, with great respect,

Your most devoted servant,

IVAN PETOUCHKOF.

Onesimus was despatched with this letter.

. . . . . .

Ivan, the son of Athanasius, made the acquaintance of Prascovia, the daughter of Ivan, the fat woman of the bakery, and the aunt of Vassilissa, after this fashion. Four or five days after the sending of the letter, the Lieutenant one evening walked to the bakery. "Well," he said, pushing open the little gate that led into the yard, "we shall see what comes of it."

He went up the staircase and opened the house door. A very fat hen with a topknot ran out and passed between his legs, cackling with all her might and fluttering wildly about the yard. The astonished face of the fat widow of the bakery appeared at the door of an

inner room. Ivan, son of Athanasius, smiled and nodded his head. The baker's widow courtesied to him. The Lieutenant approached her with his cap in his hand. Prascovia must have been expecting a visitor, for all the hooks and eyes of her gown were fastened behind. Petouchkof sat down on a chair and Prascovia sat opposite to him.

"I have come to see you, Prascovia, especially, because—" began the visitor, and then was silent.

"You are welcome, my father," replied Prascovia, with a low bow. "We are always glad to see company."

The Lieutenant picked up a little courage. "I have wanted to know you for a long time, Prascovia, daughter of Ivan."

"I am very much obliged to you, Ivan, the son of Athanasius."

Then the pair relapsed into silence. Prascovia wiped her face with her handkerchief. The Lieutenant looked earnestly in another direction. Both were very much embarrassed. However, it is the custom amongst tradespeople and those of their class in Russia to go through certain ceremonious circumlocutions when they meet, and a degree of stiffness between visitor and host is not only excusable, but quite proper, especially at a first interview. The Lieutenant found favor with Prascovia. He looked modest and respectable; and then he was a man in a superior station.

"I like your *boulkas* very much, Prascovia, daughter of Ivan."

"Do you, really? I am very glad."

"They are very nice; they are most excellent."

"I hope you will continue to eat them. May they do you good! I hope so with all my soul."

"I never ate any so good even at Moscow."

"Ah! really? I am very glad."

A fresh pause followed these words.

"Tell me," said the Lieutenant at length, "have you not a niece who lives with you?"

"My own niece, father."

"And what—what do you do with her?"

"She is an orphan. We have given her a home."

"Is she in your business?"

"Yes, of course; a working girl—a very good working girl. Yes, of course, father."

The Lieutenant did not venture to carry his questions further on that subject. So he said: "What kind of bird have you got in that cage?"

"Heaven knows! It's a bird."

"Ah! yes, indeed. Good-evening, Prascovia, daughter of Ivan."

"Receive my humble salutations, your honor. Would you condescend some evening to take tea?"

"With great pleasure, Prascovia Ivanovna."

With these words he departed. On the stairs he met Vassilissa, who, on seeing him, began to laugh.

"Where do you come from, my turtle dove," asked Petouchkof, in rather an off-hand manner.

"Be done, sir; oh, be done! you have such a flattering way."

"Ha, ha! You got my letter?"

Vassilissa hid her face in her sleeve and did not answer.

"And you are not displeased with me?"

"Vassilissa!" cried the baker's widow promptly. "Vassilissa!"

The girl went off at once, and the Lieutenant walked back to his quarters.

From that day forward he became a constant visitor at the bakery. He grew more and more in love with Vassilissa and more and more uncertain if his passion were returned. In this state of his affairs, he dreaded "to put his fortune to the touch," and risk his present position as a constant inmate in the family. By degrees he brought down all his pipes to the establishment of Prascovia, and passed whole days in the shop parlor. He made an arrangement to pay for his dinner and his tea, and nobody seemed incommoded by him.

Vassilissa sewed, sang, spun and laughed and paid very little attention to him. Petouchkof would sit smoking, looking at her, tipping his chair back on two

legs and sometimes playing *douraki* (a homely game of cards) with her and Prascovia, when they were at leisure. But there is nothing perfect in this world. However limited a man's desires may be, fate never entirely satisfies them. "A spoonful of tar always drops into the barrel of honey," as we are told in the proverb. And this was the sad experience of our Lieutenant. In the first place, after he began such intimate relations with these new associates, he dropped his brother officers. He rarely saw them except on matters of service. He was afraid of their jokes at his expense, and dreaded any allusion to bread and bakers. In the second place Onesimus was evidently disappointed in him. In the third place— Well, reader, go on with this story.

One day the Lieutenant (who now no longer felt comfortable anywhere but in the parlor of Prascovia) was sitting in her little room, while Vassilissa was in the shop making some kind of pastry. She was singing, and the door was open between the two apartments.

Some one knocked at the blinds. Ivan, the son of Athanasius, heard Vassilissa get up, utter an exclamation of welcome and surprise, and begin to chat and laugh with somebody outside the window. After a while she came back, sighed and began to sing a little louder than ever.

"Whom have you been talking to, Vassilissa?" asked the Lieutenant.

Vassilissa continued her song.

"Vassilissa! Didn't you hear me, Vassilissa?"

"What do you say?"

"Whom were you talking to?"

"That is no business of yours."

Here Petouchkof got up and came into the shop. He had his sleeves turned back and held a funnel in his hand.

"I was talking to one of my friends," said Vassilissa, when she looked at him.

"Who was that?"

"Peter Petrovitch."

"Peter, son of Peter? What Peter?"

"He has rather an odd name."

"What is it?"

"Boublitzin."

The Lieutenant walked five times up and down the room without opening his mouth, and then he said: "Listen, Vassilissa, what is this man to you?"

"To me? Oh, I know him. He is very nice."

"Nice? What does that mean, pray?"

Vassilissa looked up in his face. "Why, *nice*," she said as if greatly surprised, "means *nice*."

The Lieutenant bit his lips and again resumed his walk about the room. "What did you talk about, hey?"

Vassilissa smiled and hung her head.

"Speak, Vassilissa; tell me. I must know."

"How cross you are to-day," said Vassilissa.

The Lieutenant made at first no answer. "Perhaps I am, Vassilissa," he said at last; "I will try to restrain my temper. But what were you talking about?"

Vassilissa laughed. "He is so funny," she said.

"How is he funny?"

"Well, he has very funny ways, you know."

Petouchkof remained silent. "Vassilissa," he said at length, "tell me—do you love me?"

"What! do you want to know, *too?*"

This answer sent a sudden shiver to the heart of poor Petouchkof. Prascovia came in and they sat down to table. After dinner the baker's wife went to lie down in her room, and Ivan, son of Athanasius, stretched himself upon the stove and fell asleep. The American reader must understand that stoves in Russia, in houses belonging to the peasantry or middle class, are brick erections about eight feet square and a foot and a half above the floor of the parlor or keeping room. They are delightfully warm places to sleep upon, and are used as such by the unrefined classes. After a while he woke up. Vassilissa was nowhere to be seen. He ran out into the yard. He looked into the street. His whole heart kept crying, "Boublitzin."

"What is the matter, father?" asked Prascovia, roused by his restlessness, "why do you sigh?"

"Nothing, nothing. Only I can't breathe."

"It must have been those mushrooms," said Prascovia. "May heaven preserve us miserable sinners!"

One hour passed. Two hours. No Vassilissa. At last as the Lieutenant was again looking into the courtyard, the door on the street opened and Vassilissa appeared. Petouchkof approached her and took her hand. "Vassilissa," he said, "you know how much my heart is set on you; you know it, don't you?"

"Yes; I know," she replied with hesitation.

"I never willingly hurt any person in my life. I never deceived anybody. Vassilissa, why do you deceive me?"

"I don't deceive you, Ivan, son of Athanasius."

"We will see. Tell me. Where were you?"

"I went to Matrena's. Ask her if you doubt me."

"And was Bou— What is his devilish name? Was he there to meet you?"

"Yes."

"And you saw him! And you saw him! Ah, you saw him!"

Petouchkof grew pale. "And you arranged that visit this morning?"

"He asked me to go. But, Ivan, son of Athanasius——"

"Be silent, Vassilissa. Ah, I am but a fool! You have a right to meet whom you like, for me. I give you up. I renounce you!"

"As you please," said Vassilissa, trying to pass by him.

Petouchkof let her make a few steps forward. "Are you going to leave me, Vassilissa?"

"You are always unkind to me."

"Unkind! You know that is a falsehood, Vassilissa! When was I ever unkind to you? Tell me."

"You are unkind now. You said you did not care to have anything more to do with me. You as good as said you were a gentleman and I nothing but a servant."

The Lieutenant pulled his fingers in silence.

Vassilissa resumed after a moment's pause: "Well, God be with you, Ivan, son of Athanasius. Let us each go our own way."

"Hush, hush! Vassilissa, hush!" cried poor Petouchkof. "Look me in the face. I am not quite myself to-day. I hardly know what I say. You ought to pity me."

"You are always scolding me."

"Ah, Vassilissa, let bygones be bygones! Won't you? See; are you still angry with me?"

"You are always cross to me."

"I never will be again, my darling. I *never* will be! Forgive a poor old fellow—a poor devil. It shall never happen again. Won't you forgive me?"

"May God forgive you, Ivan, son of Athanasius."

"Come, laugh a little. Laugh as you always do."

Vassilissa turned her face away.

"She laughed, my little dove! She laughed!" cried the Lieutenant, and he made a caper in the air as happy as a child.

Several days after this passed quietly enough. But the storm was gathering. Petouchkof was very uneasy and was always watching Vassilissa, who was bored to death by him. One afternoon she dressed herself with more care than usual and slipped out of the house.

At supper time she had not come home.

"Where can she be?" said Prascovia, as they sat down to table. "However, I suppose she is amusing herself."

Her words made the Lieutenant shudder. Shortly afterwards Vassil ssa came back, and, without saying a word to any one, passed through the room to her own chamber and shut the door.

Petouchkof picked up his cap, put it crooked on his head and went home in a state of distraction.

"Are you ill, Ivan, son of Athanasius?" said Onesimus, seeing him fling himself upon the divan and hide his face against the wall.

The Lieutenant made no answer.

"Shall I go and get the doctor?"

"I am all right. Go away."

"Well," said Onesimus, "I never thought you were going to take the thing so hard! I thought it would be a little amusement to you."

Petouchkof made a sign of irritation.

"Besides," resumed Onesimus, "I never should have thought *she* could have made a conquest of you. Has she made you drink a love potion? For, looked at in the light of common sense, the whole thing is absurd. Why, she can't even talk properly. She is nothing but a common baker's girl!"

"Go away!" said Petouchkof, pressing his head down on a leather cushion.

Onesimus looked at his master a few moments, and then gave several vigorous pulls at his own hair.

"Won't you go to bed, father?" he said at last. "You would be better in bed. You had better have a little raspberry vinegar. Don't take on like that. It will all soon be over. It had to come some time."

Onesimus let an interval elapse between each of his phrases. But Petouchkof took no comfort. Onesimus watched by him all night. Next morning he ventured to say, "Ivan, son of Athanasius, are you angry with me?"

"Why should I be, Onesimus?" replied the poor Lieutenant. "You spoke good sense to me last evening, and I think as you do."

"It was my devotion to you that made me speak, Ivan, son of Athanasius."

"I know it."

Petouchkof was silent, and hung his head. "Tell me, Onesimus," he said at last, "are there really potions that can do what you said?"

"Certainly, your honor, most certainly," replied Onesimus, taking a step forward. "You know Sergeant Kroupovatof? There was a spell put on a brother of his, and he was made to fall in love with an ugly old cook. Fancy it! He was made to eat the love spell in a bit of black bread. He was beside himself. He ran everywhere after that vulgar old woman. Whatever

she told him to do he did it for her. At last the poor fellow got consumption and he died. She was nothing but a cook—an old, ugly cook! Ah, I wish all of them, women and girls——"

"She does not love me. She has never loved me. I see that now," said the Lieutenant sadly.

"Yes," replied Onesimus. "There are women like that, you know."

"Women like that, you know!" repeated Petouchkof, in a tone of deep melancholy. Onesimus was not sure whether he asked a question or repeated his remark.

At this moment there was a noise of footsteps in the antechamber, and some one coughed to announce his presence. Onesimus went out and reappeared with one of the soldiers of the garrison. He was a little man, with a face like an old woman, dressed in an old patched coat, without cravat or pantaloons on. Petouchkof shivered. The soldier drew himself up, wished him good-day and presented to him a large square letter, sealed with the seal of Government. It was a missive from the Major commanding the battalion. He desired Petouchkof to wait upon him "immediately and without delay."

After turning the letter over in his hand Petouchkof could not refrain from asking the orderly if he knew why the Major wanted him, though he knew well enough that the question would receive no answer.

"I do not know," replied the soldier.

"Has he sent for any other officers?"

"I do not know," was the reply.

"All right. You may go," said Petouchkof.

The soldier being gone, he exchanged anxious glances with Onesimus, dressed and went at once.

The Major was a stout, ill-built little man, with a puffy red face, a short, thick neck and hands that trembled owing to too much brandy.

"Ah! here you are, are you?" he growled out, fixing his little gray eyes upon his victim. "Humph! sit down till I settle you. I have long been wanting to get hold of you. Yes, indeed!"

Petouchkof dropped slowly into a chair.

"This is how it is," began the Major. "You are an officer, and I must treat you accordingly. Had you been a soldier, I would have ordered you a sound flogging and the matter would have been over. But you are an officer. And what's the good of it? Covering yourself with disgrace! Do you call that proper?"

"Permit me to ask the meaning of these allusions," said Petouchkof.

"No arguing; I hate it! I tell you I hate it! Let that be enough for you. Why are the hooks and eyes of our collar not according to the regulations of the service? It's a shame to sit all day in a bakery, especially for one who calls himself a gentleman! They say you actually put the bread into the oven. You disgrace your uniform! Do you understand me now, sir?"

"Allow me to remark," said Petouchkof, with emotion, "that all this, as I understand it, has only to do with my private affairs."

"No arguing! I won't have it. Private affairs, indeed! If it had had anything to do with military affairs, I'd have made short work of it, do you hear? I know what it is to be a soldier. I've had a birch forest broken on my back! I know all about discipline! Do you hear me? I am speaking now about the uniform. You are disgracing your uniform. Do you still want to argue the point with me?" proceeded the Major, in such a passion that his face grew purple. "Don't you know I can do what I please? Do you know who you are talking to?"

Here the Major was seized with a fit of coughing, which brought his oration to a close.

Poor Petouchkof sat on the edge of his chair pale and silent.

"While I command," resumed the Major, waving his arm in the air—"while I command this post you'll have to—to walk straight, I tell you. You may go and see what kind of people you please; it is nothing to me. But you are an officer and a gentleman, therefore you must behave—behave as such. Not put bread in the

stove; not call an old hag aunt; not disgrace your uniform; not argue; not reply."

Here again the Major stopped. He drew a long breath, and turning towards the antechamber shouted, "Frolka, you rascal! Bring the herrings."

Petouchkof rose immediately and took his leave. He came near knocking down the little Cossack who was coming in at the door bearing a plate of herrings and a decanter of brandy on a pewter waiter.

"Don't argue! Don't reply!" echoed in his ears as he ran down stairs.

Two weeks passed. Petouchkof's only consolation was to talk of Vassilissa to Onesimus; but the third week he ceased to talk and never left his room. He lay on the divan from morning until night, with his arms behind his head. He grew pale and thin. He would eat nothing. Onesimus shook his head.

One morning, however (Onesimus had gone out early), he got up, looked in his wardrobe, took a cloak, though the day was warm, and went out, looking carefully around him. A quarter of an hour after he came back with something hidden in his cloak. Onesimus had not got back, for Onesimus was absent on an errand.

Onesimus had been to the bakery. Prascovia was asleep in the store. Vassilissa was on duty.

"Good-morning, Onesimus, son of Sergius," she said gaily. "How are you? It's a long time since we've seen you."

"It does not matter about me," replied Onesimus. "I come about my master."

"Well, what of him?"

"He is very ill. I think he is going to die."

"It is not my fault, Onesimus, son of Sergius."

"Whose fault is it, then? He loved you to madness, and you treated him as if he were one of us. 'Don't come any more,' you told him; 'you bore me.' Well, he may not be over bright, but he is a gentleman."

"Oh, he is so stupid, Onesimus, son of Sergius."

"Stupid! Do you expect to have no admirers but amusing ones?"

"And then he gets so angry, and is so jealous."

"What right have you to be particular?"

"What do you want of me, Onesimus, son of Sergius?"

"I want you to come with me and say a kind word to him and comfort him."

"Heaven forbid! What can you be thinking of?"

"He may die, Vassilissa."

There was silence a few moments.

"Come, Vassilissa; please come."

"But, Onesimus Sergueitch, I don't want to; besides, Peter Petrovitch may not like it. I am going to be married."

Onesimus for a moment was struck dumb.

"Come nevertheless," he said. "You need only say, 'Don't be unhappy, sir; don't take it so hard. You must not fret so.'"

"Indeed, Onesimus, son of Sergius, I——"

But Onesimus was so much in earnest that he prevailed, and she went with him.

"Wait for me in the antechamber," he said, when they reached the Lieutenant's lodgings. "I will prepare him to see you."

He went into his master's chamber. Petouchkof was standing in the middle of the floor, both hands in his pockets, his legs wide apart. His face was red and his eyes shining.

"Good-morning, Onesimus," he cried out in a jovial tone, with an unnatural thickness in his voice. "Well, brother, I have profited by your absence."

Onesimus looked at him in great alarm and cast his eyes round the room. On the window seat stood a bottle nearly empty marked, "Jamaica rum. Best quality."

"Yes; yes, I have had a drop, brother," cried Petouchkof. "A drop too much, maybe. Where have you been? Tell me. Out with it, you know."

"Ivan, son of Athanasius, for mercy's sake——" cried Onesimus.

"Yes, yes! All right, I will have mercy upon you. I'll forgive you and Vassilissa too. Who's there?" he added, pointing to the anteroom.

"Nobody," cried Onesimus. "Who could be there? Don't go there, father!"

"Yes, but I must," cried Petouchkof, pushing him off and staggering towards the door. "I saw her. Don't touch me. Vassilissa! Come in, Vassilissa," he said, as she appeared. "I am very glad to see you, Vassilissa."

Vassilissa exchanged looks with Onesimus and came timidly in.

"Sit down, Vassilissa," said the Lieutenant. "Excuse me. I am not—how shall I say it?—quite presentable. But I could not foresee your visit, you know. Sit down on the divan."

Vassilissa seated herself.

"Well, how are you?" said Petouchkof. "And how is your aunt to-day?"

"We are well, thank you, Ivan, son of Athanasius. How are you yourself?"

"I am dead, Vassilissa. I know I am drunk, but I am dead, too."

"You are not well, Ivan, son of Athanasius; you ought to go to bed."

"No, I'm well enough. You should speak the truth, Vassilissa, and say, 'You are drunk.' I should not contradict you."

Here the Lieutenant came near falling. Onesimus supported him.

"And whose fault is it?" he went on. "Shall I tell you? It's my own. I ought to have said to you at once, 'Vassilissa, I love you, and now will you marry me? Will you?' I know you belong to trades people, but that's no matter. Such marriages do happen. Once I had a friend; he married a peasant girl—a Finn. He took her and married her. You would have been happy with me. I put off asking you to be my wife until I knew you loved me. For it seemed sometimes that unless you loved me it might be a sort of sacrifice. And I never could find out if you loved me. But it was my fault. Ask my servant if I am not honest and kind."

Poor Petouchkof here caught hold of Onesimus, who steadied him.

"Still, you were to blame, too, Vassilissa. I loved you; I respected you. What shall I say more? I know you are going to be married—and to Peter Petrovitch Boublitzin. But I am ready now to go to church with you, if you prefer a gentleman. Will you? If you will, we might even now, now this moment— But you struck me a cruel blow. Why did you not turn me off yourself, instead of leaving it to your fat aunt? I had nothing else to make me happy. You were my only joy. I have no family. I have been an orphan all my life. Who will ever give me a kiss now? Who will speak a kind word to me? I am alone in the world—as naked as a worm!" Here he began to cry. "Vassilissa, hear me! I ask one thing—let me come and see you when you are married as I used to come before. I will not trouble you. Will you grant it? Shall I kneel to you?" Here Onesimus prevented him. "Let me," he cried; "let me! I am pleading for the happiness of my life? Why should you hinder me?"

Vassilissa dared not answer him.

"You will not let me?" he exclaimed. "Ah, then, so be it! May God be with you! Now, I will say farewell. Good-bye, Vassilissa! I wish you every kind of happiness; but as for me—for me——"

Petouchkof here wept bitterly. Onesimus, who was supporting him, drew up his mouth as children do when something grieves them. Vassilissa burst into tears.

. . . . . .

Ten years after these events there might have been seen in the streets of B—— a thin little man with a red nose, wearing an old green military coat with a greasy plush collar. He passed most of his days in the shop parlor of the German bakery. Prascovia Ivanovna was no more. Her niece Vassilissa and her husband had succeeded to the business. The man in the queer military coat had but one failing—he *would* take a glass too much. Our readers of course recognize in him the Lieutenant of this story

This story, which was written for the *Overland Monthly* by Frank B. Millard, will not, perhaps, stimulate emigration into Colorado. All the same, as ROMANCE is not an advertising bureau for boomers, and as all points of Colorado are not like the haunts of "Coyote-That-Bites," we do not hesitate to lay before our readers this thrilling little tale.

COYOTE-THAT-BITES.

NOT every Apache can get his fill of blood before sun up and his fill of mescal before noon. Yet Coyote-That-Bites had managed to achieve both those delightful ends, and of all the happy savages on the Colorado desert he was the most riotously, tumultuously happy. With what keen delight he had drawn his sharp blade across the throats of Jose Sanchez and his wife, after he had stolen into their wagon in the gray dawn, and what thrills of joy shot through his breast when he silenced the yells of their two little children with the butt end of their father's own rifle. And then, when he had taken what gold was in the Mexican's bag, what mescal was in his demijohn, and had strapped Jose's rather loose-fitting cartridge-belt about his sun-brown belly, with what fierce pleasure he stole away from the scene of his bloody work, and with the Mexican's rifle on his shoulder wandered far down the dry arroyo, sipping from the demijohn the stupefying juice of the agave from time to time until he felt that he was growing drowsy.

Then he had dragged his uncertain way along until he had come to the railroad track. He stared stupidly at the bright steel rails and looked up at the humming wires in an awed sort of way. He would like to lie there behind the rocks, he thought, until some one should come along the track, and then try a shot at him with his newly acquired weapon. The demijohn was growing light and the rifle was growing heavy. Well, it was getting toward noon and rather warm, even for

an Apache, and he would lie down in the shade of the rocks over there and rest.

The humming of the wires is a soothing sound, and no sooner had his head touched the earth than sleep took a mighty hold upon him and wiped out his realizing sense of joy, as sleep has a way of doing with everybody that has anything to be joyful for. And so he lay, with the rifle by his side, and his unspeakably hideous face turned up toward the blue that arched the desert.

It was quiet there and restful—no sound save the music of the wires. Stay, there were other sounds; but they came some time after Coyote-That-Bites had thrown himself upon the sand and gone off to the land of Nod. They came faintly at first, and mingled with the murmurings of the wires. Surely they were the voices of children.

Had the red beast been awake he might have imagined that they were the haunting voices of the wee Mexican children whose blood he had so ruthlessly shed that morning, but he heard them not. They were very far from being ghostly voices anyway—those tones that now piped forth so merrily as Dubs and Gay trudged down the line. They were walking to the scoopout along the road bed—not on the track, for that was forbidden.

There were other things that were forbidden, too, and one of them was straying so far away from the station, but Dubs was "taking good care" of his three-year-old sister, and in the pride of his six full years he was equal to the care of half a dozen such as Gay.

To give Dubs all due credit, he did not know he was a half a mile from home, and he really was going to turn back pretty soon. But the children had found many interesting and beautiful things to claim their attention. First there had been a chase after a young owl that could not fly, and that made its way along in the most haphazard manner imaginable. Then a horned toad had been captured, and Dubs had dragged the disgusted prisoner along by a string until he had tired

of the sport and had let him go again. Then, always keeping close to the railroad, they had entered a great field of cacti, where Dubs had tried very hard to pick "toonies" without getting the insidious, needlelike spines in his fingers. He was fairly successful, but he would not let the fruit of the cactus go into his sister's chubby hands until it had been stripped of its dangers by his ready jackknife.

"'F on'y had sum matches to build a fire wiv," sighed Dubs, "I'd burn off vese prickles jus' like ve Injuns does."

"Oo!" came suddenly from under Gay's sunbonnet. "Wot's dat?"

"W'y, it's a jug," and Dubs left the "toonies" and started toward the pile of rocks where lay the Coyote's demijohn, and where also lay the Coyote himself.

The two trudged up the little slope, and Dubs grasped the handle of the demijohn, only to let it drop again and spring back quickly with Gay in his arms, for he had caught sight of the Coyote, and he was smitten with a sudden desire to go home.

But he saw the Indian did not move, and so he suddenly became very brave. He was certainly sound asleep and no more to be feared than papa when he lay on the lounge in his midday repose. Then, too, Dubs was quite sure he was a "worky Injun," like the Yaquis who shoveled and picked on the railroad, and so his mind became wholly at ease.

The Coyote's cartridge belt, which had been so loosely strapped, had fallen off and lay by his side. There were a hundred very interesting bits of brass sticking in it, and the children soon had these scattered all about in the sand by the snoring Coyote. In the scramble for her share of the innocent toys, Gay let one of them drop on the Coyote's leg. Perhaps the mescal's influence was on the wane, for a big brown knee was thrust quickly up from the sand, and a big brown hand clutched the ugly knife at the Coyote's side, but the hand fell and the noble red man snored on.

Dubs tried on the cartridge belt and became an

Indian, all but the indispensable knife, and he concluded to borrow that from the sleeper, whose fingers had lost their grip on the buckhorn handle.

"It's bigger'n mommie's butcher knife, ain't it, Gay?" the young savage asked, as he grasped the handle of the devilish looking blade. "Now you 'tand over vere and I'll get 'hind vis wock. Ven you tum along, an' I'll jump out and kill you."

Gay demurred.

"Oh, it's on'y make b'leve. Vese kind o' Injuns don't kill nobody," and he stuck a contemptuous finger toward the innocent Coyote. "It's on'y 'Paches 'at kills, an' vey's none yound here, mommie says. I'm a 'Pache, so you better look out."

It was dubious sport for Gay, and when it came to the killing part she screamed lustily.

"You've woked him up an 'poiled it all," said Dubs in a tone of accusation. "Now he'll want his knife."

Sure enough, the Coyote-That-Bites did shake his brown legs and arms quite vigorously, but the last two big swallows of mescal held him down. So, after turning over and burying his hatchetlike face in the sand, he lay quiet again.

When he had thus turned over, was brought into view the rifle, which had been concealed by his dirty blanket. Dubs eyed the weapon with covetous eyes. He could not withstand the temptation of feeling it all over, standing it up on its butt and trying to shoulder it, but this last feat he could hardly accomplish. Just what it was that kept his fingers off the hammer and trigger, and prevented a sound that would surely have brought the Coyote to his feet with a yell, I am sure I cannot tell, but Dubs played with that fascinating weapon for nearly an hour, while Gay poured sand over the cartridges, hiding nearly all of them from view.

By this time the sun's rays were on the long slant, and the children were very hungry. By this time, too, the Apache was growing restless, for the mescal had nearly lost its grip upon him. A train thundering by, or, much less, a "swift" brushing against his black

foot, a spider dropping on his leg, or even a big fly buzzing at his ear—any of these would have set his demon force into play again.

But the children could not wait for such demonstrations as these, though why it did not occur to Dubs that the Coyote's ear needed tickling with a greasewood twig, the Lord only knows. The wind was up, and the wires were murmuring louder than ever. The wee ones had sported in the black shadows long enough—had played with the fangs of the deadly serpent until they were tired and their stomachs were empty. So they set off on a trot for home.

Just as they turned the bend and came in sight of the low roof of the station, a "dust devil" swept by the rocks where lay the Coyote-That-Bites. He jumped to his feet, grasped his empty sheath, gave a mad whoop, and stared about in feverish rage. There was his knife, half covered by the sand, and there was his rifle, far from his side. Here was the cartridge belt, empty, and all about him in the sand were countless little footprints.

A bewildered look stole over his face, but it passed away when his eyes rested on the empty demijohn. The expression that replaced it was one of demoniacal ferocity, and the lust of slaughter lay heavily upon him. But the cartridges—where were they? He saw Gay's mound of sand, and kicking it, gave a grunt of delight to see the brazen capsules that were scattered right and left by his foot.

He picked them all up, grunting over each one. Filling the belt and grasping his rifle, he started off in the direction in which the small footprints led. Like a bloodhound, he chased along the track. His eyes scanned the plain at every turn, and his breath was hot and strong. But when he turned the big curve and saw the station, he knew that he was late—too late—and he gave a grunt of disgust, and was off like the wind over a side trail that led toward the sunset.

In the low roofed station house the mother crooned to tired little Gay, lying so soft and limp in her arms.

She looked out over the desert, saw the sun touching the tips of the solemn giant cacti with purple dots, saw the prickly pear shrubs holding their grotesque arms above the great sweep of sand that ran down to the low horizon, and felt the inspiration of the scene, as she had often felt it before. For the desert has a beauty that is all its own. She knew that other women in the great cities and in the cool, green valleys might pity her in that desolate spot, but she felt that she needed not their pity. Dubs came and leaned his head against her arm, where she sat, and little Gay nestled down with a tired sign. Yes, there was much, she thought, for which to be thankful.

And in truth there was.

Circumstantial evidence, as is so often the case, proved almost sufficient to convict the chief prisoner in this narrative, as it was almost enough to save the other one. The story, which was written for ROMANCE by Harry Howard, is only another warning that implicit confidence cannot be reposed in testimony of this description.

A LAWYER'S STORY.

THE most curious and interesting case of circumstantial evidence in my practice was that of Nat Ford. It occurred when I was a much younger man than I now am. In fact, I had never had a criminal case, and was beginning to wonder if I ever should have one, when I received the following telegram:

"I am arrested on a charge of murder. You must defend me. Come at once.—Nat."

In a few hours the Southern Express was whirling me away over the country toward Dawson, and I lay back on the cushions and tried to fancy how I should feel with a dear friend's life depending on my efforts.

Nat Ford had been my friend from boyhood. Left an orphan at an early age, he had been adopted by a bachelor uncle who was said to be very wealthy. His home, called Winthrop Place, was like many southern mansions of that period;—very large, with numerous wings, and a double piazza on three sides. I had visited Nat more than once, and remembered the house very distinctly.

I wondered whom Nat could have been accused of having murdered. He was rather of a wild boy, but not at all quarrelsome; and he never had an enemy in the world. It was of no use wondering; the telegram gave me no cue, and I must wait till I reached my destination.

In response to my telegram that I would arrive on the next train, I was met at the station by old Aleck, the coachman, with the Winthrop carriage. He greeted

me very sorrowfully. I could hardly wait till we were on the way when I began my questioning.

"Aleck, what is all this trouble about?"

"W'y bress yo' soul, Massa Harry! Ain't yo' done heard it?" Aleck looked wonderingly at me. "Somebody done killed ole Massa, an' de hossifers says 'twas Massa Nat."

I could not repress an exclamation of horror.

"Nat never could have done such a thing!" I said.

"Co'se he nebba; we all knows dat. You'll sabe 'im, Massa Harry, you'll tell de hossifers he didn't, won't you?"

I assured the old man that I would do everything in my power. I then asked him for a detailed account of the tragedy.

"Nobody doan' know much 'bout hit. Ole Massa was a-writin' in his room at midnight w'en de ole woman went down kitchen fo' hot watah fo' her newralgy. Den 'bout half hour arter, we done heard Massa Nat leave his room an nebba heard 'im come back. Nex' mo'nin we done fin' ole Massa dead on de flo', an' ma'ks on 'is neck wha' somebody done choke 'im."

"Horrible!" I exclaimed. "But why was it done?"

"Fo' money. Dey say dere's heaps ob it gone."

I could learn little more, and the remainder of the five-mile journey was made in silence.

I had expected to find Nat looking worried, but I was not prepared to meet the haggard, wild-eyed man whom I found in a cell at the jail, when I ran down there after supper.

"God bless you for coming!" he said in a broken voice as I gave him the old, firm grasp of friendship. "I knew you would not desert me."

"I never will," I replied, as I drew his arm through mine. "Now tell me all about it."

We had a long conversation, but I could learn little of importance. Nat had gone to the library for a book about midnight or a little later on the night of the tragedy. He saw his uncle writing in his room as he passed the door. After spending some time in select-

ing a book, he returned with it to his own apartment; and, noticing as he passed that the door was closed and the light extinguished, supposed that his uncle had retired. The deed must have been done while he was in the library.

At the inquest it had been shown that the old man had been strangled in his chair by some one who seized him from behind. There were no marks of violence except the livid finger-prints on his throat, and no sign of any struggle.

But the most damaging testimony against Nat was the discovery of his scarf-pin, which had dropped down the collar of his uncle's coat, and was found by the coroner. This, it was argued, could not have occurred unless Nat had stood behind Mr. Winthrop in the position one must necessarily take to commit such a deed.

The safe-door was standing ajar; all the money and papers were missing. The drawers of the desk, too, had been rifled.

This was bad enough, but I questioned the servants.

Aleck's wife repeated what Aleck had said; that when she went to the kitchen for hot water at midnight, Mr. Winthrop was writing in his room. Shortly after her return, they—both she and Aleck—heard Nat leave his chamber and go along the hall toward his uncle's room. They fell asleep shortly afterward, and neither of them heard him return.

Old Hetty, whose room was on the first floor beneath Mr. Winthrop's, was awakened some time in the night by a sound as of a weight falling on the piazza without. But she had no idea what time it was, and the noise might or might not have had any bearing on the crime.

This was absolutely all that I could learn of the matter. Personally, I was satisfied that Nat was innocent; but from the data at hand it seemed impossible to establish his innocence in court. Young and inexperienced as I was, the responsibility was greater than I liked to bear, and I asked Nat to let me bring in an older lawyer. His reply was a most emphatic negative, his reasons being that no other man would believe

him innocent, and therefore no one else would put his whole heart into the work. Expostulation was in vain; I must work out the case myself.'

Court was at that time in session, and Nat's case was set for Friday of the following week. During the days that followed I worked as no man ever worked before to find some clue to the murderer. There were not wanting detectives to ply their skill, but all in vain. Nat passed the time in a sort of stupor, seemingly too benumbed to realize the awful turn things were taking.

Hoping against hope that the sound Hetty had heard had had some connection with the deed, I looked for the twentieth time for some indication of its cause. Every inch of the piazza floor near her room I went over, and was at last rewarded by finding a very slight clue,—very slight indeed, but in darkness such as mine it seemed a ray of light. On the piazza floor I discovered two curious little indentations, one on each side of a pillar, and very close to it. They were in the form of a tiny horseshoe, with the toe toward the edge of the piazza, as if some diminutive pony had left his tracks impressed on the soft pine floor. It might have been done by children at play, but that was not likely, for I could find but the two. To me they seemed like the dints made by plates on the heels of shoes to prevent their "running down." They were in the very spots where a man's heels would strike if he should slide rapidly down the pillar from the floor above. To be more certain, I told Hetty to go into her room and listen. I then went up to Mr. Winthrop's room and stepped out on the piazza. Swinging over the edge, I clasped a pillar and slid down, striking sharply on my heels. They made impressions in the same relative positions on the floor, and Hetty avowed that "fo' de Lawd, dat was jis' sich a n'ise as she'd done heard de night ole Massa was killed."

This might prove to be a clue. Now if I could find the man who made those tracks! I informed the detectives of my theory, but they considered it worthless.

The time passed rapidly for me, and the day before

the one set for Nat's trial arrived without any further discovery. On that day I went to the village to make some final arrangements for the trial. I had decided to do my best to have the case continued, in the hope of finding some further clue to the real murderer, but public feeling was so strong against Nat that I was morally certain of a refusal.

A man was that day being tried for burglary, and, having finished the business which had brought me to town, I went up to the court-room to hear the trial.

The preliminary sparring had come to an end, the jury had been sworn, and the prosecuting attorney was just beginning to state his case when I entered. I learned from his statement that on the very night of the tragedy at Winthrop Place, a hole had been cut in the door of the village store, the door had been unbolted, and all the valuables stolen. Nearly $200 was taken, together with several revolvers, some cheap jewelry, and other articles. The crime was committed at or near the hour of the murder of Mr. Winthrop, for the store-keeper remained until nearly midnight and the deed was discovered by a watchman shortly after one. The evidence was purely circumstantial, but unless the prisoner could prove an alibi, it looked dark for him, if the prosecutor could prove all he stated.

I watched the prisoner narrowly during the statement of the case, and was struck by the attention with which he listened. A hardened criminal, as his appearance indicated him to be, seldom manifests any interest in the proceedings against him, but he paid as close attention as if this was the first account he had had of it. He listened with intense interest to the story of the burglary;—the boring of a hole in the door; the sawing out of a circular piece of the door; the insertion of the hand; the pushing back of the two bolts; and all the details of the crime.

He was a very large man, with immense hands and feet, which were apparently as much in his way as are those of a bashful school boy. I was much impressed with the muscular appearance of his great, brawny

hands, as he moved them restlessly about. They seemed to be just healing from recently-inflicted wounds. His eyes, shining like those of a beast beneath a tangle of bushy eye-brows, had in them the peculiar, crafty look of a man who is deceiving his fellows and is greatly pleased thereat. Breathlessly he listened until the statement was made, when he electrified the whole court-room by rising slowly and addressing the court:

"May't please th' court, we might as well cheese th' racket an' save trouble. I'm th' bloke as pulled th' shanty."

His counsel was horrified, but the judge asked sternly:

"Do you enter a plea of guilty?"

"You've said 'er, Jedge. I'm th' cove as done it."

In spite of this confession, his eyes seemed to me to gleam with secret satisfaction; and there played about his mouth a smile which, I thought, had in it a touch of pity for the stupidity of mankind in general and of this court in particular.

The court asked numerous questions as to the motive of the deed, the manner of performing it, and whether he had had any accomplices. To all these he replied, with the same sly twinkle of crafty satisfaction in his eyes,—or, at least, so I thought. He needed money to go to New Jersey to see his wife; he had not had an accomplice; he had done just as the lawyer had said: cut a hole in the door, inserted his hand, shot back the bolts, and entered. His sentence was deferred until the close of the term, when all the sentences would be announced. The spectators filed out of the court-room and down the street, not a few commenting, in my hearing, on the case to be tried on the morrow. The prisoner was led back to his cell.

As I passed the store which Dix had robbed, curiosity prompted me to stop and take a look at the scene. Mechanically I pushed my hand through the hole where the thief had thrust his on that eventful night. As I did so, a thought struck me,—a thought so novel, so

strange, so exciting, that I could not have been more agitated if the bolts I touched had been heavily charged with electricity.

Like an insane man, as I verily believe some of the people thought me, I rushed back to the temple of justice. When I again emerged, there was in the hands of the sheriff a subpœna, calling upon the authorities to produce one Samuel Dix as witness in the case of State vs. Ford on the 25th day of June, 187—.

Next I went to the jail.

"May I see the man Dix?" I asked.

"Shure an' it's meself 'd be plazed to admit ye, but me oirdhers is that shtrict Oi da'sn't. Divil a sowl can see him the day," was the reply.

"When was he arrested?"

"The silf-same day afther his shport in the shtore."

"Has he bought any new clothes since then?"

"Divil a rag."

"Thank you. Smoke?" And I extended a Havana.

"Bedad now! It's quare, but Oi *do* fale an appeytite fur the same."

I shouted, laughed, sang, and acted so extravagantly on my way home that old Aleck was actually horrified. I heard him tell Aunt Phina after our arrival that "Massa Harry was so sorry foh Massa Nat he done tuck a drap too much, an' 'twas mighty juberous whedder he'd be able to talk to dem lawyeh fellahs termorry."

I tried to inspire Nat with my hope without telling him the grounds on which it was based, but to no purpose. I dared not tell him my plan, lest at the last moment it should fail. He thought I was feigning a cheerfulness which I did not feel.

Not a wink did I sleep that night, but lay awake perfecting my plan for the morrow. It was a desperate one, but the more I thought of it the more I was convinced that I could pursue it successfully.

The hour of the trial came, and with it a nervousness on my part before unknown. Nat was by far the cooler when we faced the vast throng assembled to hear so

celebrated a case. A stranger would have taken me to be the culprit.

A quick glance over the sea of faces showed me many I had known in other days, but the one which made my pulses tingle was that of the gigantic Dix, closely guarded by the sheriff.

Amid deathly silence the proceedings began. The prosecutor stated the case clearly and concisely, dwelling at length on the enormity of the crime, and producing a noticeable impression on both jury and spectators.

The examination of witnesses began. Aleck, Aunt Phina, and Hetty told their stories, trying all they could to shield Nat. None of the others knew anything of the case.

The spectators stared, the lawyers nudged each other, and even the judge looked surprised as I declined to cross-question witness after witness. At length, the prosecution was through, and the defense was instructed to call its first witness.

"Samuel Dix," I called.

"Samuel Dix!" yelled the deputy.

Dix came forward unhesitatingly, and took the stand.

Nervousness was with me now a thing of the past. I felt cooler, clearer, stronger, than for many a day, as I faced him.

"Mr. Dix, do you know the prisoner?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered.

"Do you know where he lives?"

"Yes."

"Were you ever there?"

"No." He answered quickly and a trifle uneasily.

"You were never there after night?"

"What in thunder 'd I go there fur? No, I wasn't." This, very irritably.

"Where were you, Mr. Dix, on the night of the tenth of this month?"

He paled slightly, then answered, with the peculiar twinkle of cunning in his eyes which I had noticed on the day before: "Doin' some shoppin' down 't the store."

"Tell the jury just how you did that bit of shopping."

"I object!" yelled the prosecutor.

"Mr. Gray," I answered, "I did not object once this morning, though you asked many irrelevant questions. You might allow me one privilege."

"I withdraw my objection, your Honor," said he.

"Now, Mr. Dix, go on with your story," said I.

And again, as he told of that midnight robbery, came into his eyes that gleam of suppressed exultation.

As he finished, I made a sign to an officer who, with an assistant, brought into court the door from the store.

"Now, Mr. Dix," said I, "show the jury just how you opened this door."

He stepped forward promptly, saying with a broad smile:

"W'y, I jist put my hand——"

He put his hand to the hole in the door as he spoke, but broke off of a sudden, turning deathly pale.

"Go on, Mr. Dix; show the jury how you put your hand in and unbolted the door."

"Great God!" he groaned, and his face became clammy.

The hole was *too small to admit his hand!*

Again I made a sign to the officer, and he brought in two planks from the floor of the piazza at Winthrop Place.

"Mr. Dix, if you have never been at Winthrop Place, tell the jury how it happens that these heel-prints were found on the piazza there. Also tell them who scratched your hands in that manner."

He sank half fainting into a chair, covering his face with his hands. As he did so, I made a sign to the officer, who drew off one of Dix's shoes. On the heel was a plate in the form of a horseshoe, corresponding exactly to the impression on the plank.

"Caught—caught at last!" groaned Dix, shaking as with a chill.

"Do you confess to this murder?" I demanded.

"Lord help me, yes! I done it, I done it, but I plead guilty to the other to keep it hid," he muttered.

"That is my case, your Honor," said I, and sat down.

For a full minute there was silence.

"The prisoner is discharged, and the court congratulates him," said the judge.

Then, in spite of calls of order, the throng cheered till the windows rattled. Nat, who had been so brave all along, laid his head on the desk and sobbed aloud.

Dix afterward told us where he had concealed the money and papers, and they were all recovered. He also confessed that he had found Nat's scarf-pin on Mr. Winthrop's dressing-table, and had himself put it inside the dead man's collar in order to fasten suspicion on Nat.

The robbery of the store was traced to a gang of village boys.

Dix was hanged.

The exquisite sarcasm of the following sketch is matched by nothing in recent fiction. The philosopher will see in it a commentary upon the uselessness of ambition; the thoughtful woman will wonder how a wife could so culpably allow her husband's genius to lie idle and become dull; the matter-of-fact citizen will congratulate Mark-Antony upon his good sense in preferring an easy domestic life to the struggles of emulation; but everybody will agree that the story is a capital one. It was translated by Isabel Smithson for ROMANCE from the French of Paul Arène.

THE LAUREL-WREATH.

"I AM happy," said Mark-Antony, "perfectly happy."

As he spoke, I glanced round the comfortable room in which we were sitting; on the polished floor the light from the wood-fire danced merrily between the reflections of the furniture; the lace curtains hung white and soft, with here and there a rent skilfully darned between a leaf and flower, while beyond the curtains was seen the neatly trimmed garden-hedge. Then as I looked at my friend, stout, calm and smiling, and remembered what he had been when I saw him last, excitable, high-strung, music-mad, his nervous system like a treble-string that is ready to snap, I became convinced that he spoke the truth,—he was perfectly happy. Nothing in his surroundings indicated artistic tastes, unless perhaps the piano, though that was closed so as to be utilized for holding vases of fresh flowers, and above it, hanging to the wall by a faded blue ribbon, was what looked like the skeleton of a wreath, for a single leaf, the last remaining one, showed that it had been made of a branch of laurel.

The sight awoke my memories, and while Mark-Antony poked the fire, my thoughts went back to the night of his triumph. In his "Virgilian Symphony" he had set to music the very soul of the poet, combining in a tempest of orchestration the Bucolics and the Æneid—the lowing of cattle, the sighing of pine trees

in the wind, the soft murmurs of fountains; then the trumpet-blasts of Trojan warriors, and the love-sobs of the deserted Tyrian queen. That night, in the midst of thunders of applause, an unknown woman, beautiful as a goddess, had presented to the young composer, who was pale with pride and hope, this laurel-branch, plucked for him, it was said, from Virgil's grave.

Unmindful of that night, Mark-Antony poked the fire vigorously. "How odd," he said, "that you should have stumbled against me by chance in this out-of-the-way corner of France! You wonder how I came to exile myself? Indeed, I hardly know, but one day I suddenly decided to go out of town for a little while—just a month or so—for I was sick of Paris with its rush and fever, of the endless routine of an artist's life, of weeks that had no Sundays, nor an interval of rest. I set off by rail, and stopped here merely because the name of the place pleased me; it seemed to promise a land of calm forgetfulness, of lazy rivers, of willow-trees, of peaceful hills, whose tops were crowned with mists. I was not disappointed, but the most seductive of the charms I found here was the novel sensation of hearing distinct sounds breaking complete silence; I was tired of the infernal din of Paris, a thousand roars combined in one, and never ceasing, and I was thrilled with delight by the music of a village church bell, the ringing of an anvil, the sound of the women washing clothes in the brook, and the report of a sportsman's rifle on the hillside.

"Fate ordained that I should meet an old college-mate. He was living as a gentleman-farmer on his family estate, and had a niece who was a pretty girl, not very rich, it is true, but we pleased each other in an unromantic way, and were married. It was not by any means my intention to give up Paris entirely. On the contrary, we spent two winters there; the third year, however, our courage failed, for my wife was not very strong, and I, in my loose slippers and corduroy jacket, thought gloomily of always dining in evening-dress, of making and receiving endless 'calls,' of yawning in

the theatre night after night. Then there were the children to think of, and we ought to economize. So, little by little, I was weaned from city-life, until at last I seemed to see Paris through a mist, and now it is to me a far-distant place, to which I do not know the way. I am thoroughly provincial. I have my wife, my children, a small circle of friends who do not exact a return in kind for every courtesy. I shoot a little, fish a little, cut down my hay and put it in my barn. That has been my life for the last ten years."

"And the music?" I asked.

"Oh, I have not given it up entirely," he said with a smile of embarrassment; "that portfolio in the corner is nearly full. I have begun several great works, but nothing is finished, for somehow, between ourselves, I find that the intoxicating Paris air is necessary for inspiration. Your presence, however, will do just as well, and I shall set to work in earnest."

"Poor Mark-Antony!" I thought. At that moment the door-knocker sounded. I heard the servant go through the hall, and then a lady of prepossessing appearance entered the room, preceded by two little boys dressed in sailor-suits, their cheeks like rosy apples and their calves scratched and sun-burned.

"My wife," said Mark-Antony, presenting us to each other, and the lady, after bidding the children shake hands with me, asked if I would not stay to dinner.

"Of course he will, not only to-day, but every day as long as he remains here!" exclaimed my friend joyfully, and his wife echoed his cordial words, though a cloud of dismay passed over her face.

"We have nothing but a stew for dinner to-day," she said; "perhaps you will not like it. My husband told me how to make it, with pork, wine and spices. I am rather successful with it, I think."

"Delicious!" I said, and she hurried into the kitchen, which adjoined the parlor-dining-room. As she raised the lid of the stewpan which stood on the stove, its contents gently simmering, a white, savory steam rose round her like a cloud. Then she rejoined us, holding

a spoon into which she was blowing gravely with the air of a priestess.

"Taste it," she said to her husband, who, having obeyed her, pronounced it perfect.

She put the spoon to her own lips, then said slowly, "No, there is something wanting." After a thoughtful pause her face brightened and she exclaimed, "Of course, I have forgotten the laurel-leaf!"

She went over to the piano, and smiling gaily, unconscious of sacrilege, picked with her plump little hand the last leaf from the Virgilian wreath. I was horror-struck, but Mark-Antony seemed utterly indifferent; he was evidently accustomed to see his former glory absorbed in stews.

A quarter of an hour later I thought no more of it, for we sat down to dinner, and the stew, with its slight savor of laurel, was indescribably delicious.

Kings and princes in the days of the Inquisition were not obliged to resort to dangerous duels, or to expose their sacred persons in any way in order to vent their jealousy. A great institution, which performed any work of vengeance with diabolical thoroughness, was at the beck of those who knew how to manage it, and King Felipe, in the following story by Moritz Tokai, was evidently one of the initiated. It is not often, however, that the author of such infamous mischief is himself so summarily punished. This remarkable sketch was translated from the Hungarian for ROMANCE by Emil Friend.

"HIGHNESS" AND "MAJESTY."

JUANA, the wife of King Felipe, passionately loved the art of painting, and practised it with admirable results. It was, of course, rumored that the poor queen had become deranged, and that this artistic application was a diversion suggested by physicians. It is certain, however, that Her Highness became a consummate artist. Her perception was keen and her hand true; an interesting face, seen but once, she could depict in a shape readily recognizable both in feature and character.

One day it pleased her royal husband to scan the album wherein the versatile hand of the queen had sketched from her rich fancy and reproduced scenes from her charming surroundings.

At that time, let it be understood, Juana alone was addressed as "Your Majesty." Her spouse, in consequence of being the offspring of a foreign sovereign, was addressed as "Your Highness," and upon all official documents requiring both signatures one read "Juana *regina*," and underneath, ran the other, "Felipe, *rex*." This king by marriage found in his wife's sketch-book numerous and varied portraits of a remarkably handsome knight. Sometimes he was portrayed as a victorious hero; then as a praying pilgrim; and again as a kneeling lover. This truly handsome face must have occupied the queen's fancy, for it was often depicted,

and in a manner strikingly conscientious and ardent. One could see at a glance that the heart had assisted the hand.

The visage was not that of King Felipe. The face was wholly unknown to him. Perhaps it was merely an ideal vision of youth such as appears to maidens in romantic dreams, a supernatural being. This was Felipe's first conjecture as he gazed upon the pictures; but, upon further reflection, his conception of them became less innocent. He was seized with jealousy, and jealousy and revenge go hand in hand in Spain. An inquiry sent to the Grand Inquisitor anent the original of the sketches, a wink to the argus-eyed officers of the Inquisition, and the information was not long in coming. The man with the handsome knightly countenance, the full, red, laughing lips, the large, luminous eyes underneath the thick, dark, bold eyebrows was—so the Grand Inquisitor informed the king—Don Jayme d'Avila, a *marrano*.

At that time a *marrano*—which is the Spanish term for a pig—was a marauding knight, and generally an apostate. Although proselytes, they were strongly suspected of heresy, and, consequently, bitterly persecuted, despite the fact that they were the flower and the glory of the Andalusian nobility, celebrated for their valor in tournament, their chivalric deportment, and their bravery in battle. It was not impossible that Don Jayme d'Avila bore no particular resemblance to the pictures in the queen's sketch-book; but he was a *marrano* and the wealthiest Spanish nobleman of the time. This was enough for the judges of the Inquisition.

There lived in Castile an artist of renown. His reputation was not achieved by creating a new school, or the painting of valuable masterpieces, but by his wonderful quickness and accuracy in sketching portraits. His name was Luis de Lucero, but he was known among his *confrères* as Fapresto the Rapid. King Felipe sent for Fapresto.

"Master," said the king, "you are to make several sketches of a living countenance. The person will be

at your disposition for two hours. How many copies can you deliver in that time?"

"As many as Your Majesty commands."

"No flattery! Imprimis, I am not addressed as 'Majesty,' and, secondly, an artist cannot be commanded. Shall you be able to make ten good portraits of the face within two hours, if you receive a compensation of two thousand picayunes per copy?"

The painter's greedy eyes glittered.

"If Your Majesty—I crave pardon, but I find the appellation just—if it please Your Majesty to honor me with four thousand picayunes for each drawing I shall guarantee to make fifteen copies."

"Good! You shall have the sum; but if the face you are to delineate change from time to time and the expressions vary constantly, will it not confuse you? Remember, the countenance will not be an ordinary one; on the contrary, it is to be an extraordinary, a remarkable face."

"Oh, Your Majesty, an *outré* face is ever a fascinating study! It is something for which a real artist yearns. If such a subject await me, I shall gladly portray it for less money—say, three thousand picayunes."

"Silence! One does not bargain with servants in the Escurial. Go to the Alyuazil's Chamber. You will there receive material for your work."

In the chamber they handed the artist the necessary material and requested him to step into a closed sedan. For a long time he was carried through echoing halls and corridors. Finally, the carriers stopped in what the artist surmised must either be a room with low ceiling or one which was thronged with people, for the echoes ceased.

The doors of the sedan were opened and Lucero stepped out. At the first glance he recognized the place. Although he had never been there before, yet any child in Spain would have known it, for mothers and nurses had often recited to the little ones under their care terrible tales of this awful chamber.

The ceiling, walls, arches, and pillars were covered

with black cloth. Depending from the huge pillars were massive rings and chains bearing the peculiar rust that accrues from dried blood. In the corner lay iron tongs, scissors, queerly-shaped spoons, hammers, screws, and other strange objects. In the rear, upon a slightly elevated platform, sat several sepulchral, mute figures attired in heavy black, their faces covered with a cloth of the same hue. At one side, the weak, trembling flicker of a candle intensified the gloom and horror of the place. It was the chamber of the Inquisition.

But one visage upon the *estrade* was uncovered. It was that of the Grand Inquisitor. He was seated upon a high chair amid the judges, and was attired in a black, pearl-studded, satin gown, which was strikingly conspicuous among the plain garments of the others.

At the other side of the court were a table and three stools, one of which was reserved for the artist, the others being occupied by two men who were as thickly veiled as the judges. One of them had a quill in his hand. He was the recorder. The other, who requested Lucero with a haughty gesture to be seated, suggested the king. Not a word was spoken. Action alone seemed to suffice.

After the artist had arranged his material the personage at his side gave an authoritative sign to the Grand Inquisitor, who repeated it to two myrmidons. The myrmidons walked to the centre of the hall and removed a cloth beneath which a ball-shaped object appeared to move. It was the head that Fapresto was commissioned to depict. It was not a lifeless head severed from the body. On the contrary, it was a very animated, an heroic head, from which a pair of angry, fiery eyes seemed to dart flames. The brow expressed a noble courage, and the lips evinced the utmost contempt. It was a head of the kind that warriors revere and women adore.

Fapresto comprehended the situation at once. He must sketch the agonizing changes that the *Caldaria* would make upon the face.

The artist was not of a timorous nature, but he could

not suppress a shudder. This Torquemadian torture consisted of a large metal cask filled with oil, placed under the floor, directly beneath an aperture. The delinquent was forced into the cask, the hiatus giving to the spectators a full view of the head. Under the cask a slow fire would be ignited and intensified according to the obstinacy of the prisoner.

Lucero's crayon flew over the parchment. It depicted a face, the eyes of which shot forth contempt, hate, and uncompromising disdain. Fapresto's neighbor glanced over the artist's shoulders and nodded approvingly.

The Grand Inquisitor breaks the silence; turning toward the accused, he says: "Don Jayme d'Avila, confess to your judges: When did you first speak to Juana, the daughter of Fernando of Aragonia?"

The lips opened. "I have seen her only from afar, and have never spoken to her."

"Don Jayme d'Avila, do not attempt to deceive your judges. You have been detected in dishonorable relations with Juana. Confess! What proof of her illicit love has she given you?"

At these words the heroic face flushed with anger; the eyes shot forth lightning glances. The knight was surpassingly handsome at this moment.

"Your question calumniates the one to whom you and every Spaniard owes reverence and duty. Were I to countenance your question I should feel self-contempt. The queen is as pure and innocent as an angel from Heaven."

Lucero was about to sketch this indignant visage when his hand was stayed by the personage beside him. "Never mind that; you will have a prettier expression presently."

He nodded to the Inquisitor, who gave a signal to the two myrmidons. They hurried away.

Soon D'Avila's expression changed. The fire had been ignited.

"Now, then, Fapresto!"

At first the eyes glowed and the veins upon the brow began to swell. A presentiment of his fate was mir-

rored in the knight's face. Despair and the frightful cognizance of utter helplessness disfigured that manly countenance. It was an interesting second study.

"Will you answer my question now, Don Jayme d'Avila?" resounded throughout the hall in the hollow, querulous voice of the Grand Inquisitor.

"May my tongue be paralyzed forever if it respond even in a single syllable to your infamous question."

At these words the head turned toward the judges again in full possession of the heroic determination that had faltered for a moment. The lips were tightly compressed as though to keep back an exclamation of pain, and the eyes expressed derision rather than submission. Lucero grasped his crayon for a third study.

The fire was stirred and fanned. From the white brow large drops of perspiration flowed down the face, upon which the intense struggle between an iron will and unspeakable pain was visible. Suddenly the cramped lips opened and groans were heard that must have elicited pity from hearts less hard than those in the Inquisition.

"Now, Fapresto, draw!"

The expression changed as rapidly as thought, and gradually became metallic. Mind no longer predominated in it. The eyes rolled wildly in their hollow sockets, the mouth frothed, and the lips emitted spasmodic curses.

"Quick! Quick, Fapresto! The fourth study will be a gem!"

The fire was again stirred and fed.

"Don Jayme d'Avila, will you answer my question now?" asked the Grand Inquisitor in a calm but terribly significant tone.

The head did not respond; it had ceased to anathematize, but—it began to laugh! The excruciating agony had forced the knight to maddened laughter, and then to demoniacal yells. This horrible laughter caused the myrmidons to tremble, and Lucero was compelled to think of the gold that would soon make him

wealthy in order to quell his throbbing heart, steady his shaking hands, and subdue his tears.

The person at the artist's side again nodded. The Grand Inquisitor understood. He ordered the flames to be partially extinguished; otherwise the victim would too soon be delivered from torture.

The face slowly lost its ruddy color and gradually took a flaccid, yellow hue. The features returned somewhat to their natural lines, but furrows in the shape of diminutive reptiles appeared to flit across the countenance. Not a vestige of youth or beauty remained. The sixth sketch was finished.

The Inquisitor again queried: "Will you reply, Don Jayme?"

The head had comprehended. Slowly it was lifted; the eyes opened wildly as though they would dart from their sockets; the chin shook and fell. The scene was an awful one. The cold-hearted and rapacious artist shuddered as he turned away.

"Well, Fapresto, why do you hesitate? This is the most interesting study of all."

The phantom head spoke in a thick, stertorous voice: "Felipe—in seven—days—I shall—answer you!"

The eyes rolled, the lids sank heavily, the lips became blue and remained open; the head drew to one side and fell heavily upon the flagstone. Every feature stiffened.

"Extinguish the fire!" cried the Inquisitor.

"Is not this a magnificent study? Draw it carefully and at your leisure. He has fainted. They will revive him presently."

They did not succeed, however. He had not fainted. He was dead.

"You stupid fellow!" cried the artist, when Don Jayme's death was announced. "Was it necessary for you to die at the eighth sketch? I lose four thousand picayunes!"

"Do not fear; you will receive the full amount for the eight studies. They have been superbly executed. Now, go home and retouch them."

Lucero stepped into the sedan and was conveyed to his study.

In four days the portraits were finished. They were executed with terrible fidelity. Felipe praised them highly and sent them to the queen.

On the fifth day it was announced that the queen was insane. On the sixth day the grandees of Castile were assembled in the Escurial, when they were informed by Felipe that in consequence of the queen's deranged mind she would be unable to govern. On the seventh day Felipe the Fair was no longer "Highness," but "Majesty," and his name was written above Juana's upon state documents. On the eighth day this same Felipe lay upon a bier — he was found dead in his chamber that morning.

The elopement of the exemplary Maria, in the following clever story by the Italian Countess Lara, is one of those social eccentricities which are to be encouraged. Even the most philanthropic defender of the mother-in-law will unhesitatingly excuse the Baron Paolo for taking his case into his own hands, and will wish the fleeing young couple good luck. "The Colonel's Wife" has been translated for ROMANCE by A. H. Cady.

THE COLONEL'S WIFE.

In every regiment the most conspicuous figure, of course, is that of the Colonel. When not even present in flesh and blood, he still dominates the minds of all, officers and soldiers alike, influencing the thoughts, directing the actions—in short, regulating to a large degree the life of every individual under his command.

But in the —th Cavalry, one of our finest regiments (which, however, I will not name, for I do not wish to bring down a storm about my ears), the Colonel is only second-best; his wife commands. Two interesting types, really worthy of study, are this military couple. He is of medium size, thin and wiry, looking as if he were made on purpose to ride a horse monkey-fashion. A few short blonde hairs adorn the back of his head, and big mustaches, standing out like a brush, are under a nose grown red from frequent libations. Small, green, but good-natured eyes, a pale, long, and very large face, complete the picture. He is a man of silent temperament, to whom, in the early days of his career, it must have cost not a little to accustom himself to call out the orders on the parade-ground.

Indeed, the brief and sonorous commands are about the only words he is heard to utter throughout the day. He is content, when he has finished his duties, to go to the stable, and there, with cigar in mouth, to walk up and down with the quiet regularity of a clock, while two orderlies groom the horses. Then, always as mute

as a fish, he returns to the house, and taking his usual place in a corner of the drawing-room, plays chess with his daughter, while within reach of his hand is a small glass of brandy, which the young girl refills from time to time, as he empties it.

The person who talks for him, who scolds for him, who, in brief, makes and unmakes everything for him, in the family, in the barracks, and, even, according to herself, throughout the length and breadth of the land, is the Colonel's wife. A good six inches taller than her husband, with a mass of black hair worn on the top of her head like a helmet, an ample figure, and two wide-open eyes, which once fixed on a person never move apparently, the Colonel's wife marches about the house, making the very windows rattle, and the people around her tremble. Notwithstanding her age, when she gets into her dark, close-fitting cloth habit, involuntarily one likens her to a modern Juno; and when, erect and stately, she sits on her dark bay, with two subalterns always following her, and gallops past the manœuvring regiment, the men can't help thinking, and saying: "She's as handsome as the devil, anyway!"

Curiously enough, the husband seems never to have comprehended her physical beauty, or, more probably, if he has recognized it at all, has regarded it simply as another phase of that moral force in her, to which he has always had to submit. He is her cousin on the maternal side. He does not, therefore, belong to the family of the Count D——, from which she derives her aristocratic name. Hers is, she considers, the finest family in all Italy, and, it must be confessed, the Colonel is not the ideal husband she dreamed of in her youth.

However, Montaigne teaches us a bit of philosophy in telling us, that when we cannot have what we love, we must love what we have. So, Nina—this colossal creature is called *Nina!*—who had danced ten consecutive winters at the balls in Milan, Turin, Florence, Rome, Naples, and other cities, and, for ten summers,

as well, had swam around the rotundas, and sung, with that beautiful contralto voice—I had almost said, bass voice—of hers, in the concerts at all the brilliant naval stations, seeing her adorers, and with them the hope of a fine match, disappear, one after another, finally turned to her cousin. She told him, with that resolute manner of hers—he was a Captain then—that it was quite time he married her. He obeyed, happy indeed that this woman, whom he regarded as a superior being, and worthy of a throne, should stoop to him. From that day on, docile and silent, he strove only to carry out her desires: her wish became his law. "She is an angel!" he says, stretching out that sheep-like face of his, when speaking with any one of his wife. "She knows everything, does everything. She is an angel!"

It is true that from the very beginning of her married life, Donna Nina has known to a nicety the relations between the superiors, companions and subalterns of the Colonel. She is not really bad at heart, but meddlesome and imperious to a degree. Once informed about things, she directs them according to her own pleasure, imposing her protection, so to speak, on every one, no matter what his position or character may be. Donna Nina is at once the *bête noire* and the oracle of the regiment. If an officer fears anything, it certainly is not from the Colonel, but from his wife; if he hopes for or desires anything, there is no one but Donna Nina for him to go to. She knows to what families the officers belong, the houses at which they visit, and even about their love affairs. She knows the ability of the sergeants who teach the privates, and the names even of the soldiers who are put under arrest. Their punishment she often decides upon. She not only arranges the program for the band which plays in the barracks square on Sunday, but has even written the orders of the day. No one will dare rise up, and say that I am exaggerating; for, indeed, if any one did this, I would give the name of the regiment which Donna Nina commands, and that would settle the question, once for all.

From the union of these two characters, the Colonel

and his wife, whose very natures, one would think, would be up in arms against each other, but which nevertheless, are so perfectly in accord, there has sprung a singular being, who possesses the calm goodness of the father, and the indomitable force of the mother. Nothing which might occur could make her noisy or violent, for she hates disturbances of any kind. Nothing could induce her to withdraw from a stand once taken. Above all, she has a profound, almost childish, adoration for both of her parents. Physically, Maria does not resemble either one or the other of them, although she has something of the coloring and features of both. She is tall and slight, blonde, but with a distinguished cast of features. Her great attraction, however, lies in her superb eyes, of a greenish brown color, and penetrating expression.

To tell of the researches, the studies, the projects of Donna Nina, the artifices she has brought to bear upon the officers of the regiment, from the moment her daughter reached a marriageable age, would fill a three-volume novel. Quite a different course from that pursued with her own adorers! First one, then another, of the young subalterns was seized upon, with, one might almost say, the fury of a wild beast seeking food for her offspring. While she was paying court to the one whom at the time she looked upon as a favorable *parti*, the Lieutenant in question would be the recipient of innumerable favors, even little acts of tenderness. He could have everything he asked for from the Colonel's wife, save, of course, the often-desired leave of absence; for that would have taken him away from the field of action, and made him forget even his character of suitor and future husband. The Colonel's wife would never make such a mistake as letting him out of her sight.

When, however, Donna Nina perceived that the young man was hanging about the house, not only to escape some disagreeable duty in the barracks, but also to dance attendance on Maria without any serious intention, then indeed the poor fellow could count upon

every petty discipline it was in her power to impose upon him, and sometimes even a really severe punishment. For instance, one young Captain, just promoted, was actually forced to ask to be put on waiting orders. There are several others, too, whom Donna Nina has not yet forgiven. Even now, one of them, a second Lieutenant, with a private income of 30,000 francs, who is simply a soldier from love of the profession, is made to sleep in the barracks, because the Colonel's wife got wind of some clandestine love affair of his, and thus decided to put an end to his nightly outings.

But in the midst of all this, whether her mother was in a most benevolent frame of mind, or violently angry—both of which phases she exhibited in the liveliest manner—Maria continued her girl life without thought or care for the future, paying no heed to her mother's continual outbreaks. She enjoyed her morning gallop, then returned to the house, and settled down to her favorite studies of literature or to play chess with her father. It was curious to see the pages she filled with her fanciful ideas, sometimes in prose, again in verse, surprising her teachers by her bright inspirations and clever work. Again, it was equally curious to note how, with the patience of a great lady of the mediæval ages, she would study and prepare herself to conquer the Colonel at chess. With the men who, from time to time, paid her their addresses of their own free will, the girl was always the same, showing no preference whatever. In vain her mother, now with great effusion, again with the impetuosity of anger, would try and instill into her daughter her own sentiments; Maria did not love, and did not hate any one either.

The officers, on their part, knowing the peculiar humor of the Colonel's wife, were often puzzled as to what course to pursue; for they did not wish to compromise themselves, and lose their individual liberty, or peace of mind, in one way or the other. What a long-drawn sigh of relief was breathed then, when they learned that the Colonel's daughter was to marry Baron Paolo S., a cultivated, nice young fellow, who had

plenty of money! He owned the house in which the Colonel lived, and had first seen Maria on the balcony, tending her roses and other flowers. Then he had watched her getting on and off her horse, and had fallen desperately in love with her, the more so, perhaps, because he did not know the Colonel's wife personally. When he did know her, it was too late: one does not turn back on the road to marriage any more than one does from that of death.

Unpleasant domestic scenes began soon enough. Donna Nina, discontented because she had not succeeded in marrying her daughter into "the family," as she expressed it—that is to say, to some one in the regiment—actually attempted to rule her son-in-law with the rod, as she ruled the officers. At first, the Baron affected to submit to this "system,"—partly perhaps because, in the midst of these military surroundings, he felt himself somewhat out of place; partly, too, because he flattered himself that this overbearing woman would show him courtesy, at least, in return for his tolerance. It was of no use. Donna Nina, rigid and severe, commanding officer to her very marrow, found fault with everything "the civilian" did, and treated him, in fact, as if he were an unwelcome guest. Then, with returning tenderness and regret for this or that officer, she never lost an opportunity to exclaim, in her son-in-law's presence, but always addressing the remarks to her daughter: "*So and so* would have been the husband for you, darling!" (Here she would sigh like a furnace.) "For one of your temperament, dear child, *such an one* would have been just the husband!" (Then an oath, worthy of a corporal.)

The young wife would smile faintly, sometimes continuing the game of chess with her father, who, cigar in mouth, and the glass of brandy at his side, was, as usual, silent; sometimes, leaning over the big arm-chair in which her husband sat reading, she would gently and caressingly stroke his soft brown hair.

One day, when the Colonel's wife had been more aggressive than usual, the Baron fairly lost his patience,

and, springing to his feet, exclaimed in a voice as loud as that of Donna Nina: "I tell you what it is, madam; it would be a good thing if Maria had not a woman with the manners of a bar-maid for her mother!"

The words had scarcely left his lips when the Colonel's wife, furious, beside herself with rage, hurled a perfect avalanche of abuse at him, saying finally that he was unworthy to be the husband of a Countess D——, and thus to be connected with the first family in Italy; that in the army alone was there any longer the old-time respect; that after his cowardly insult—to be expected of a civilian!—insult to her, the mother, the Countess D——, and the Colonel's wife, Maria would have the sympathy of all, if she left him, then and there, and went off with some fine fellow in "the family." . . .

"Maria, put on your things, and come with me!" said the Baron to his wife, in a commanding tone.

"Maria, if you take one step out of this house, I'll slap your face!" screamed the Colonel's wife.

Maria, calm, but pale, returned to her seat opposite her father, took up a pawn, and turning her lovely blonde head toward her husband, said resolutely and briefly: "Mamma is wrong, as usual. I adore you, my dear Paolo;" and, then, thoughtfully, made a capital move on the chess-table.

The Baron left the room, muttering something under his breath; the Colonel's wife went out by an opposite door, uttering loud threats. The two at the table continued their game.

That evening, at the dinner hour, a note was handed to Maria from her husband. In it Paolo told her that he did not intend to bear any more insults from his mother-in-law, and was determined then and there, to leave the house, begging Maria to join him. The young wife replied to the note, begging her husband, in the most endearing terms, to submit to the inevitable, not to heed her mother's peculiarities, but to return to the family circle.

She pleaded in vain. "The Colonel's wife has the

manners of a bar-maid," was the vindictive Paolo's response, and he repeated this in all his letters. Thus ten or twelve days passed, during which Donna Nina grumbled a great deal to the Colonel, who in turn called her "his angel" more than ever, and agreed with everything she said or did. Appalled at the idea of losing his daughter's society, he got every legal opinion in town in regard to the question of a separation of the young people; even a divorce, insisted Donna Nina, aye, an annulment of the marriage, if possible.

Meantime, Maria went out frequently alone, returning always with great dark circles round her eyes, ate scarcely anything, and slept badly. "What can be the matter now?" thought the Colonel's wife, dreaming always of the possibility of a military love-affair. "Lieutenant R. has been very attentive lately, and when she is at the piano, looks at her as if he'd like to eat her. But, really, I have not noticed anything! The daughter of the Countess D. do anything out of the way! . . . God forbid. I'd shoot her myself!" It had never entered the mind of the Colonel's wife that a woman could be in love with her own husband, especially when he had so far presumed upon his rights as to take the reins of government into his own hands.

Well, one evening, just after dinner, a lady, closely veiled, left the Colonel's house, carrying in her hand a small morocco travelling bag, with silver clasps. The lady walked quickly, almost ran, as if pursued; and hailing the first empty cab which passed, sprang into it, light as a gazelle, then whispered to the driver, as if she were confiding a great secret to him, "To the station!"

Arrived at the station, she rushed toward a handsome young man, who, giving her his arm, drew her quickly into a reserved compartment in the train. This particular "section" had quite a festive air, with soft cushions on the seats, and up in the rack, bottles of wine, and small baskets of fruit, and so forth, suggestive of a dainty luncheon.

She trembled, though smiling, while he laughed gaily, like a man who has at last gained his happiness, and means never to let it go again.

"I am running away with you, my darling, do you understand? Aye, a regular elopement, adored one!"

"Hush, hush!" she cried. "Pull down the blinds, for pity's sake!"

He drew down the curtains, and continued, with the delight of a school boy: "I'm thinking of the Colonel's wife, and how she will look when she hears of your flight. I am really sorry that I cannot be behind the door to enjoy the scene!"

"I am thinking of poor papa," said Maria, "how sad he will be, all alone at the chess board!"

But the Baron, without giving further thought to the curious types of humanity represented by the Colonel and his spouse, covered with kisses the face of his wife, his sweetheart, who was fleeing toward the sea with him, as he drew her head down with tender violence upon his shoulder.

It is worth while for all imaginative persons to remember, especially if they happen to be students of medicine, that every phenomenon can be rationally accounted for. If the poor fellow who was so badly frightened in the following story could only have recalled this fundamental fact, and that the days of miracles are past, it would have been the most important thought of his life. The story was written for ROMANCE by James Young Simpson.

THE DEAD HAND.

"ABOUT half-past nine on a cold night in December, when I was studying medicine in New York," began the doctor, in response to our request for a story, a true story, "I left my boarding-house to resume my dissection of a body assigned to me that morning at the medical school. I knew there would be few, if any, of the boys dissecting when I reached my destination, for all the students were expected to leave the dissecting-room at ten o'clock. Some of us, however, by judiciously tipping the janitor now and then, were allowed to remain longer, and, being deeply interested in my work, I had prepared to stay until I had finished tracing the course of a plexus of nerves which I was then working on.

"The snow was falling lightly, and the wind whistled around the house and through the city. The college was distant but a few blocks, and having entered the old sombre-looking building, I made my way to the upper floor, and reached the dissecting-room through a long, narrow corridor and by a short, winding flight of stairs.

"The entrance to the room was almost in the centre, and reminded one of a large trap-door in the stage of a theatre. It was a large apartment, consisting of two wings and a narrow part joining them, and accommodated twenty-six tables, on which were laid the bodies.

"That very morning all the tables had been filled anew, and as I stepped into the room, before me lay the nude, ghastly forms of the cadavers. The sight was rendered the more weird from the fact that none of

the forms were covered, and all stood out clearly in their pale, uncanny outlines.

"The only person I found in the room was another student, sitting alone among the bodies, with his face toward the entrance, and a gas-jet burning brightly over his subject. All the other lights were turned down low.

"Having donned my gown and taken my instruments from the locker, I passed into one of the wings and commenced the work which gave me so much pleasure and filled me with so much interest. My back was toward the other student, and the jutting of the wall at the corner would have prevented me from seeing him even if I had turned around.

"We had wished each other a good-evening when I entered, but after I had commenced work, everything in the house was as quiet as the tomb. The snow-storm had become quite violent. The howling wind from time to time could be heard around the building.

"Minute and minute passed, and the same intense silence continued in the room, only occasionally broken by the slight noise of the instruments on the tables.

"The appearance we presented must have been grotesque and fantastic to a marked degree as we sat at work, surrounded by the spectral forms of the departed.

"Over an hour had passed and still we dissected on, not heeding the time because of the interest we took in our work.

"At last the doleful sounds of a bell in the church near the college were heard, indicating the hour of twelve, and as I listened and realized that it was midnight, I thought it time to go home. Hardly had the tones died away, however, when I was startled by a most piercing shriek of fear and horror. It rang out through the stillness of the night with terrible distinctness, and then died away with the moaning wind. It so startled me that for a few seconds I was almost paralyzed, but, quickly regaining something of my composure, it flashed across my mind that the other student was the only person near enough to have been heard so plainly. I listened for a moment longer, but

there was no repetition of the sound, so I hurried around to the part of the room where he had been dissecting.

"There he sat, pale and motionless and showing a horrible contortion of his face, which was turned toward his left shoulder.

"I started back, but only for a moment, and then approached.

"One close look at the man, and in the direction in which his gaze was riveted, and I understood the situation. I felt a dreadful, sickening sensation. My limbs trembled. The cold perspiration of fear broke out all over me. My hair seemed truly to stand on end.

"The student was dead. His pale, affrighted face was turned toward his shoulder. His eyes were staring and glassy. In his hand the dissecting-knife was firmly fixed, and on his shoulder rested—*the hand of the corpse* on the table just behind him!

"Not knowing what else to do, I mechanically passed around and examined the body of the man, whose hand was still outstretched, until it rested upon the poor student. He was undoubtedly quite dead. His body was cold, and his eyes were open and covered with the film of death.

"Next I hastened to the room of the janitor and brought him to the dreadful sight."

"But how did it happen if the man behind him was dead?" inquired one of the listeners, breathlessly.

"Nothing was easier, as you will learn in a moment," said the doctor. "We examined the surroundings to determine the cause of the awful tragedy, and soon found it. Around the wrist of the corpse we found tied a broken string and to the gas-jet the other piece. When a dead body is laid on a table and the arms are extended, the surface of the arm corresponding to the palm of the hand lies uppermost. When the dissector has finished that part, in order to reach the other surface he ties the wrist to the gas-jet above by means of a string. One of the students had done this, and the string had broken. The descending hand had fallen on the boy's shoulder and had frightened him to death."

Like the little almshouse "sister," one of Miss Wilkins's charming creations, "'Liza," in the following anonymous story from the *Ludgate Monthly*, had her compensations. Perhaps no real banquet is ever quite so satisfying as the barmecide feast which owes no allegiance to thrift nor reason.

'LIZA.

THE air was thick with steam and impregnated with the smell of soap, and the temperature was by no means low, more especially as the sun was streaming in through the uncurtained windows. But the laundry girls were used to these inconveniences and thought nothing of them. They chattered continuously over their work, not because they were happy or because they had anything particular to say, but because they had no conception of the dignity of silence. The conversation was, perhaps, not of the most edifying description, and the language employed was forcible, garnished with slang, and not free from superfluous expletives, for these girls were not of the highest type. There was a curious tawdriness or rather gaudiness about their, for the most part, ragged dresses; they had big, heavy fringes, which the steam had taken out of curl, so that in nearly every instance they straggled into the bold eyes beneath them; their faces, too, were in a striking contrast to their hands in the matter of cleanliness, for it was not compulsory to put them in the water in order to earn a livelihood; but they were better in this respect than they would be nearer the end of the week, for to-day was only Tuesday.

The only exception to the universal untidiness was manifested in the person of one whom the girls called 'Liza (the i being pronounced as if it was the diphthong ai). This 'Liza, the preliminary "e" of whose name was invariably dropped by her acquaintances, was a hunchback, and her face, though it possessed the merit

of cleanliness, was almost repulsively ugly. The complexion was sallow, the mouth badly shaped, the eyebrows obtrusively dark and heavy; very sad were the eyes beneath them, had there been any one to note their wistful look, but 'Liza did not encourage scrutiny, and, indeed, the brown eyes were not remarkable in themselves, and were moreover half hidden by the drooping lids, from which she glanced in a sideways, half-sinister manner. 'Liza was not very popular among her companions, partly because she chose to be exclusive, and partly because she could on occasion say unpleasantly sharp things. But there was one person whom she loved, and that was Miss Callender.

By-and-by the ringing of a bell created a diversion among the workers. Almost simultaneously eight pairs of red, soapy arms were drawn out of the wash-tubs, eight pairs of red, crinkled hands were wiped on some portion of convenient apparel, and eight pairs of ill-shod feet tramped into an adjoining room.

At a table in this room stood a young lady, very sweet in appearance and prettily dressed. She nodded in a friendly way to the girls, and shook hands with each one as they passed. She had their interest at heart, and made it her duty to come two or three times a week and provide them with dinner. This dinner consisted usually, as on this occasion, of a plate of soup and a large slice of pudding, for which they paid a penny; a second helping of either could be had for a farthing; so the payment was merely nominal, but the girls were exempt from the feeling that they were the recipients of charity.

The coppers were "dabbed" down on the table in a little pile, and Miss Callender ladled out the soup, which was quickly and noisily consumed. The young lady watched the other women, smiling. Perfectly dainty herself, their roughness did not seem to repel her.

"Girls," she said presently, in her quiet, clear voice, "I am going to give a party in the Mission Hall. Will you come?"

There was a chorus of delighted assent, accompanied

by a general clattering of spoons on the almost empty plates.

"Lor, Miss; what sort of a party might it be, now?"

"Oh, friendly," said Miss Callender. "Music, and plenty to eat, and—you may bring your sweethearts."

This caused a prolonged giggling.

"Might we bring more than one?" inquired Polly Blaines, who enjoyed the distinction of being the prettiest of the girls.

Miss Callender shook her head disapprovingly. "You oughtn't to have more than one," she said, smiling.

"Oh! as for that, Miss, I don't want any, I'm sure; but there, the more you draws off, the more they comes on. That's how it is with men, and that's why them as don't want 'em always has the most admirers."

And Polly, conscious of a fascinating retrousse nose and a dimpled chin, tossed her head in the air.

Whereupon all the girls, not to be outdone, and by no means reticent on the subject of their love affairs, fell to talking about them, finding the topic eminently congenial, and treating it in a manner which displayed no more vulgarity of heart than is concealed by certain ladies. Miss Callender rather encouraged than checked them; she liked them to be perfectly natural before her, and was glad of anything which gave her an insight into their lives and characters.

Two there were who kept silence; one a little newly-married woman, to whom love was too sacred for common speech, and 'Liza.

The pudding she had begun to attack seemed to stick in 'Liza's throat, and she had great difficulty in gulping it down, for the other hunger of which she was often conscious, the hunger of the heart, now so asserted itself as to make her oblivious of bodily needs. Something there was, too, of bitterness in her mind as she listened to the talk of these others. Perhaps Polly's words did more to cause it than anything else: "Them as don't want 'em always has the most admirers." Looking up, she suddenly met the eyes of this girl. To

her morbid imagination they expressed pity, perhaps scorn. She crimsoned.

There was a momentary lull, so that they all heard her when she said, in a peculiarly loud, harsh, defiant voice:

"Mine isn't livin'; mine isn't."

"Yours? Did you have a sweetheart once?" asked the married woman, not urgently, though there was the slightest perceptible accent on the pronoun.

"And why not?" asked 'Liza, and her voice was louder than before. "It isn't only pretty girls as has people caring for 'em. There's other things besides looks."

"Of course there are, dear," said Miss Callender, soothingly, for 'Liza's eyes flashed ominously. "Goodness is worth much more to a good man."

"What was his name, 'Liza?" asked Polly Blaines.

Polly was conceited, and 'Liza, hypersensitive, scented patronage.

"I ain't going to tell yer," she said. Then, with swift contradiction, "his first name was Charlie."

"Was he handsome?" asked Polly, pinching her neighbor under the table, so that the latter, a high-colored, coarse-looking girl, gave a little squeak.

"I never see anybody better looking," said 'Liza, with promptitude. "He wasn't any of your pink, dolly men." (Polly's favored suitor happened to be fair.) "He was dark, and his nose was straight, like a gentleman's, and his teeth was white and" ('Liza warmed to her subject) "and he used to wear a red silk tie, with a pin in it. And," she went on, "he always gave me lots of presents—lots, and he loved me so, as he couldn't bear me out of his sight. Oh," she cried excitedly, "he did love me, and we was so happy, keepin' company, and he was a-goin' to marry me——" She paused abruptly. Indeed, her shrill voice had got almost beyond her control.

"What did he die of?" asked one of the girls, with genuine compassion in her tones.

'Liza looked at her—gasped—hesitated a moment—then rose and pushed back her chair.

"That don't matter to no one," she said, in a hard voice, that yet had a catch in it. "He's dead, and that's enough; and you needn't any of you ever talk to me about him. So there!" And she went back into the laundry.

There was a moment's silence. Miss Callender sat looking thoughtful; then she rose, and followed 'Liza into the next room, closing the door. The other girls regarded one another with some surprise. 'Liza was usually silent, and was considered morose, but her affliction had made them kind to her in their rough way, though she was certainly not a favorite among them. But now that they realized that she had a romance in her life, the love of sentiment, which is in every woman, made them feel a sympathy for her hitherto unknown. There is often a delicacy of feeling among the very poor, which springs up in unexpected places, like a little flower in the cleft of a rugged rock.

'Liza was standing by her washtub, and she had already plunged in her hands and begun to vigorously soap one from the heap of towels she had to wash. Her lips were set tight together, her bosom was heaving, and a tear had rolled down her cheek and dropped off it on her coarse apron. She put up her arm, her hand being soapy, and laid her elbow across her eyes for a minute.

"Eliza," said a soft voice, in accents more tender than she was wont to hear, so that her name sounded quite musical.

She looked up.

"Eliza," said Miss Callender again, and then she came close up to the girl and drew her toward her.

'Liza was unused to any such demonstration. Perhaps that was why she half-pulled herself away.

"My dear," said Miss Callender, "we must be great friends, you and I, for we have a sorrow in common. Nothing binds people so close together as to be linked by mutual trouble. Two years ago I was engaged to

be married, and he who was to have been my husband was—was shot, in Afghanistan."

"Oh, Miss!" cried 'Liza, "Oh, Miss!"

"So you see," said Miss Callender, softly, "you and I must be a comfort to each other."

'Liza did not speak. She began to pull at her apron strings, then getting them into a knot busied herself undoing it.

"It don't seem as I could do anythink," she said presently. "You always seems happy and bright-like. You're mostly smiling. I don't see how you can be so when any one as has cared for yer has died."

"God helps me to be happy," said Miss Callender, simply. "Besides, I have many things to be grateful for."

"Ah, there yer are," cried 'Liza, almost passionately; "you ain't poor, and lonely, and hugly. You could have love if yer wanted to; you don't go longin' and longin', and a pain in your heart mostwhiles. I wouldn't tell any o' them," (pointing to the door) "for they wouldn't understand, but you ain't like them, and you won't make a mock at me, but there's times, 'specially in the evenings, when I ache for some one to say quite gentle-like to me, ''Liza,' and just to look at me a bit lovin'. Why shouldn't I have what others do? 'Cause I ain't pretty? Ain't my heart as good as Polly's there? Wouldn't I be truer than her? May be I won't mind later on, but I ain't so old now as all that come to. And natur's natur, whether we're ladies or poor girls. Ain't it nat'ral to want to be loved?"

"Most natural, dear," said Miss Callender, to whom 'Liza was just then a revelation.

"Then," went on the girl, emboldened by the sympathy which was rather in manner than words, "when folks are kind to me it's mostly pity as makes 'em; and I hate to be pitied. It ain't because they wants me with 'em; there's even some, I suppose, as wouldn't care to keep company with me in case folks should stare. And, oh, I'm proud, I am—I'm awful proud. There's none so proud as them as is despised, you know."

"I don't despise you, Eliza," said Miss Callender, spontaneously. "And I'm sure others don't."

"If I thought you liked me a bit, not 'acause you pitied me, I'd be uncommon glad," said 'Liza, shyly. "I s'pose," she went on, half-ashamed at her own confidences, "it wouldn't make no manner o' difference to you, me likin' you?"

"Indeed it would," Miss Callender answered, and she bent forward and kissed 'Liza on the forehead.

'Liza turned away quickly. "I reckon I'd better get on with my work," she said, huskily.

And at that minute the door opened, and the others came trooping in. Miss Callender exchanged a few words with them, and then went back to get her things.

'Liza rubbed steadily for a few minutes, then suddenly she threw the towel, with a splash, into the water, and her hands and arms covered with soap-suds, rushed into the room where they had had dinner.

Miss Callender, with her hat and gloves on, and her parasol in her hand, was just giving some directions to the old woman who did the washing up. "Well," she said, seeing the girl.

"Miss," said 'Liza, looking down. "There's something I'd like to ask yer afore you go." She hesitated, glancing at the woman. Then coming closer, said wistfully, in a low tone, "Do yer think you would ha' p'r'aps kissed me just the same if it hadn't been for that."

"For what, Eliza?"

"Him—him as you kep' company with bein' dead."

"Of course, Eliza."

"Even if it hadn't been for what—what I told yer at dinner; do yer think, now, you'd ha' kissed me if it hadn't been for that?"

"Of course I would," said Miss Callender again heartily. "Why not?"

"I was only a wantin' to know," said 'Liza, and she went back to her work.

She sighed heavily two or three times, and the others, thinking that she was sad because of that lost love

of hers, were markedly kind to her, and Polly Blaine even suggested that, if she was inclined to join the party, she would be delighted if she would do so, in company with her and Tim Croftie, though she experienced great relief when the invitation was refused, for Tim was of an uncertain temper, and might not approve of the arrangement.

Indeed, from that day began a new era for 'Liza. Whether it was that Miss Callender singled her out for special attention, or because they were really capable of a lasting impression themselves, it is impossible to say, but it is certain that she was differently treated by the other women, and equally certain that this treatment had a salutary effect upon her. Repellant at first, she grew daily more approachable, less suspicious, more gracious, and her better qualities came into play. Perhaps the influence of Miss Callender had not a little to do with this, for from the beginning 'Liza had loved her, and now her feeling was little less than worship. And to love another is so good for a woman's soul that it works like magic on her whole being. It made possible to 'Liza the comprehension of a love higher than Miss Callender's; and the little London heathen, being taught by her dear lady concerning those things of which she had been ignorant hitherto, became what the girls called "religious." Toward the end of the summer she consented to be confirmed, and went to classes, and this seemed to the others to make 'Liza more important, especially when she explained that "there was ladies at the classes."

'Liza was nearer being happy now than she had ever been in her life, and yet she seemed sadder, too. Often she heaved great sighs that made her neighbor turn and look at her, and frequently there were marks of tears on her face, so that by and by it grew evident to the others that there was something weighing upon her.

One day the little married woman, who had developed a sort of friendship for her, ventured to ask if anything was the matter with her.

"I can't help seein' as you ain't quite yourself,

'Liza," she said; "you ain't in no sort o' trouble, are yer?"

'Liza shook her head.

" 'Cos if there's any way of helping yer, 'Liza, it ain't much as I could do, but what I can, I will, yer know. Might it be as yer've quarreled with some one, or is it yer rint, now?—or perhaps may be——," coloring, in doubt as to how 'Liza would take it, "may be you're caring for some one agin', which we can't help our feelings."

'Liza shook her head.

"It ain't nothink o' that, Mrs. Jones," she said.

"It wouldn't be religion as is depressin' you, I hope?" said Mrs. Jones, with as much severity she was capable of. "It do take some people like that, which there was a young man our way, as came nigh goin' off his head; but that ain't nateral. It ought to make us 'appy. My Jim, he's sort o' religious hisself, which he pays great rispect to Sundays, and always washes hisself, and I'm sure a brighter man you couldn't see."

"It isn't religion," said 'Liza, "and yet it is. Everything gets sort o' upside down when one looks at things that way, and all what seemed natural once seems wrong now. It's interestin' seein' how things twist round, but it's sad, too; it's disturbin'. There's past things I'd wish different now."

"P'raps you could undo 'em," suggested Mrs. Jones, who was eminently practical. "Anyway, God knows, don't he? if you're sorry?"

'Liza sighed.

"I s'pose," she said, with apparent irrelevance, "one didn't ought to care if one was loved or not; and there ain't no doubt as pride is my besettin' sin!"

Mrs. Jones shook her head meditatively. She was "afraid religion was upsettin' 'Liza," she told her husband that night.

As the time for her confirmation drew near, 'Liza looked graver than ever, and more worried. At last it came to the day itself. She had obtained a holiday from the laundry, through the influence of Miss Cal-

lender. What was the surprise of that lady, and the others, therefore, when, in the midst of the midday meal, in rushed 'Liza! She had on a clean print dress, made for the occasion, but her hair was disordered, her face pale from fatigue and excitement, her eyes shone brightly.

"Hullo," exclaimed the girls in a breath. "My! ain't she a swell." They thought she had come to show off her dress.

"Eliza," said Miss Callender. "What do you want? You will be late for your confirmation."

"Oh, miss," gasped 'Liza, almost breathless, as she was, "I had to come. I've tried and tried to say it, and I never could; and at first it seemed a white one. But lately it's come 'atween me and God. And I've thought on it at night, in bed, and when any of you has been kind to me, it ha' cut me like a knife. And, oh, miss, when you've spoken of him, I've been a near fallin' down and explainin' to yer, but somethin' held me back. And I told God, but he seemed to say it wasn't any use my just tellin', unless I undid it. Oh, please, all of you. I don't care now what you think of me, or if you despise me. I can't go to church until I've told yer. Him as I talked of was only what I dreamed about when I was lonely, evenings and times; and there wasn't no Charlie, really, and no one ain't never loved me, nor wanted to marry me."

There is the best of authority for saying that jealousy is as cruel as the grave. It was sufficient to send a man (let us hope) to the gallows, in the following story, which was written for ROMANCE by Rose A. Lester.

THE ANTE-MORTEM STATEMENT.

IT was an accident, she maintained, and nothing could shake her story. The statement, such as it was, had been wrung from her almost by syllables, and now she lay back, quite spent, among the pillows. In the silence that fell, the little round nickel clock on the mantelpiece ticked inordinately loud and the mewing of a cat in a distant hallway grew shrilly audible.

A man stood at the foot of the bed, gnawing his mustache. It was easy enough to see that the fellow was fighting with fright, although that, of course, counted for nothing. Innocent or guilty it would doubtless have been the same, for the woman was his wife.

The magistrate set down the deposition, and studied the floor with pursed lips and knitted brows.

"Is that all?" he asked, presently. "Have you nothing more to add?"

She did not answer. Her eyes were fixed, with steadfast and wistful regard, upon her husband, while the gray shadow of death began to creep up and overspread her face, purging it as it passed of its stains of sin and care, refining it and calling a pale ghost of beauty from the vanished years.

"Of course I understand your purpose," said the official, without looking up. "You wish to shield a—a certain party, let us say. Very well—that rests with you. But I warn you, I warn you earnestly, that you will fail. I warn you that, unless you tell a clearer, better story than you yet have told, he must answer for himself."

The man flushed darkly and made as if to speak, but the woman checked him with a piteous gesture.

"Why can't you leave me be?" she wailed. "I told you twice. Do you think I'd swear wrong—me like I am? I tell you he never touched me. I fell—" her voice shrunk into a hissing whisper, and she paused, breathless, with her lips apart. "That's all there is," she added, with another effort.

In the crowd of neighbors that gaped about the door was a tall, slender girl, with curly hair and a bold, handsome profile, who stood a little behind the rest. She had listened greedily, with averted head, but as these words fell, she gave a little sigh of relief and lifted her face suddenly to the man beside the bed. He, too, looked up, and their glances met. It was an interchange as swift as thought and as inscrutable as the grave, but the dying woman transfixed it as it passed. Instantly the delicate, still mask of dissolution dropped from her features. It left them hideous, menacing, convulsed. Her dull eyes blazed into life. She sat up, swaying awfully and clutching at the bloody frill of her chemise. Her mouth opened and shut, but no sound came forth, and a spasmodic fluttering shook the hollow of her throat.

"Hand me that whiskey," said the doctor, quickly; "she wants to speak!"

She answered him with her eyes and tried to swallow the whiskey, but the liquor ran from the corners of her mouth. Then for a dozen heartbeats Death fought with Will. Her blonde hair, loosened in the struggle, fell in a mat around her brows. With a curious gesture, she seemed to be clearing away some unseen obstacle in the air. Slowly she gathered her expiring forces, and signed the magistrate to bend near; but when she spoke, they were astonished at the calmness of her voice.

"I lied to you," she said, in her ordinary tone; "he did it." With that she died.

They could still hear the cat mewing in the hall and the steady ticking of the clock.

The artist is undoubtedly the champion lucky man of fiction. The hero of the following clever story from *Tinsley's Magazine* seizes his opportunities as felicitously as any of his predecessors, and the sympathies of every reader will be with him from the start.

ON THE CLIFF.

FIFTEEN years ago Barmouth was a quiet little village. The whistle of the iron horse was not to be heard within many miles, and the passage of the coach between Dolgelly and Carnarvon was the sole event of the day. There was one hotel and some half-dozen shops and other houses where lodgings were to be obtained; but slight as was the accommodation, it fully equaled the demand.

"Just the place for a fellow to be able to sketch without people coming to look over his shoulder," was the comment of Hugh Carson, a young artist, as he took his first stroll upon the sands.

A tall, well-built young fellow, with legs rather long for his body, and a face rather heavy in repose, but bright and winning when he smiled. The tide was out, a few fishermen were mending their nets and tarring their boats, and a lady and child were down upon the rocks near the edge of the sea.

"A bright bit of color on those dark rocks," he said, "with the island on the left and the sea beyond, and that abrupt headland coming in—just the thing to begin with."

He had his sketching-block under his arm and his color-box in his pocket, and, sitting down on the sand-hills, he set rapidly to work. For an hour and a half he worked steadily, and then the bright bit of color and the child moved off toward the shore. Still he worked on at his sketch, and was almost startled when a shadow passed across his paper. He glanced up, and saw a girl of some twenty years, with a younger one

of seven or eight. The child dropped the hand she was holding, and came fearlessly up.

"Please may I look at your picture?"

He nodded silently, and went on with his painting.

"O cousin Amy, such a pretty picture! and there are you and me out on the rocks. Do look!"

The girl glanced at the artist, but neither by look nor motion did he second the child's request; and with a little shrug of her shoulder she turned away, and walked on slowly until overtaken by her cousin.

"What a bear I am!" the young man said to himself. "I ought to have got up and grinned and taken off my hat, I suppose, and asked her to look at it; but it's no use, I can't get on with women. I never can think what to say to them. I have no doubt she thought me a perfect bear. And so I am. But I suppose it's my nature." And he went on with his painting. "One o'clock; it's time to go in to dinner. The tide is coming up and covering the rocks; I will finish it to-morrow morning."

The next day he worked until dinner, and was greatly contented with the result.

"It will make a capital thing," he said. "I have been very lucky with the lights. I do think it will be the best thing I have done."

His pleasure was a little marred by the fact that the two girls had again been out on the rocks, and had on their return passed close by him; but this time the child had kept close to her cousin.

"Offended evidently," was his muttered comment, "and no wonder. I wish I was not such a bear."

The following morning he was late in starting for a stroll across the sands. The tide had already turned, and there are few places on the coast where it comes in more rapidly than on the Barmouth sands. For a long time its approach is so gradual that it can hardly be noticed; but when it reaches a certain point it comes in with startling speed.

"There are those girls on the rocks again," he said, and he shaped his course so as to carry him to the right

of them. He had not gone fifty yards along the edge of the sand when he heard a loud cry behind him. He looked round, and saw that the elder girl, who was reading, had risen from a camp-stool on which she was sitting, and that the child was on the rocks, already cut off by a rapidly increasing stream of water. The cry of the child on discovering her situation was echoed by her companion, who was about to rush into the water when Hugh ran up.

"All right, little one!" he shouted cheerily. "I'll fetch you out."

So saying, he waded into the water, which was already nearly up to his waist, reached the little girl, took her in his arms, and carried her to the shore.

"There you are, as right as possible," he said, as he put her down; "but you must mind, missy, for the tides are very rapid here."

"Thank you so very much, Sir," the elder girl said; "it is most kind of you."

The artist looked into the flushed face of the girl, and the eyes in which the tears were standing, and his habitual shyness fell upon him. Muttering something about its being no odds at all, he raised his hat and, turning upon his heel, again pursued his walk.

"He really is a bear," Amy Herbert said, as she hurried off with the child toward the sand-hills, pursued by the fast-rising tide; "and yet, by his voice, I am sure he could be very nice if he liked."

Amy Herbert had had no experience whatever of shy men. She was the only daughter of a very wealthy Manchester cotton-spinner, and Manchester does not class shy young men among its productions. She was accustomed to admiration, for she was pretty and an heiress, and in both capacities made much of; but, though a little wayward and willful, from always having her own way, she was really unspoiled, and was as bright and lovable a girl as was to be found in the metropolis of cotton.

For the next two days Hugh Carson missed the young lady and child from the shore, but several times saw

the flutter of a light-colored dress high up on the hills behind Barmouth.

"That rising tide has given her a fright," he said to himself, "and they've taken to the hills. Rather a nuisance, because I have done with these flats, and shall be doing the hills myself. However, they are extensive enough without our running against each other, as we always seem to be doing here."

In fact, as Hugh and his acquaintances took their meals at about the same hour, and both came in at the very last moment before them, it is not singular that each day they had, either morning, afternoon, or evening, met at least once in the quiet little street; and each time Hugh raised his hat, Miss Herbert bowed frigidly, and her little cousin nodded brightly. Once when he passed the door of their lodging, just as they were going in, the child ran across the road as her cousin entered, and put her hand into his, and talked to him for two or three minutes, and conveyed to him the thanks of her mamma, who was not strong, and did not go out much, for having carried her across the tide. For the next three days Hugh Carson was engaged in painting a picturesque old farm-house lying far on the hill. The subject was a good one, and he set out to produce a finished picture on the spot, and worked at it from early morning as long as the light lasted, making his breakfast and lunch off milk and bread and cheese obtained at the farm-house. Upon the third evening he was returning from his work, walking along the edge of the hill, looking down upon the sea, when he came upon the little girl lying on the ground, crying bitterly.

"Why, little one, what is the matter?"

The child, who had not heard him approaching, leaped to her feet, and upon seeing who it was, a look of pleasure flashed across her tear-stained face.

"O, please, Sir, do help me! Cousin Amy has tumbled down the hill!"

"Good gracious, child, where has she fallen?" Hugh said in horror; for the spot where they stood was above

one of the steepest slopes between Barmouth and Harlech.

"Down there, Sir; she was picking a flower when she slipped; and I can't get at her, but I can see her."

And the child led the young artist to a point further on, where the plateau projected, and the face of the hill where Amy had fallen was visible.

The slope where she had slipped was very steep, but became even steeper lower down. Then a rocky ledge projected, and below it an abrupt precipice some fifty feet high. Amy Herbert lay on the ledge. She had rolled down on to it, and had evidently struck her head, for she was insensible. This ledge was some three feet wide; and from the position in which the girl lay, it was probable that, at the first movement made as she came to, she would roll over the edge.

"All right, little one; don't cry; I will get to cousin Amy. She has hurt herself; but I dare say she will be all right when I get to her."

Hugh spoke cheerfully, but he was by no means sure that the girl was not killed. He looked closely at the grassy slope. It was easy enough to slide down; but once down there was no getting up again. He was fully a mile and a half from the town; but he dared not run for aid, for if the girl partially recovered she might be dashed to pieces before his return. It was evident that he must slide down to her. But the child puzzled him. He was afraid to send her to the village by herself, afraid to leave her alone on the top; besides, if they were to stop on that ledge till help came, it would be much more pleasant with the child there, both for Amy and himself.

"Look here, Pussy," he said, after a minute's thought, "will you be a good quiet little girl if I take you with me down to cousin Amy?"

The child nodded seriously.

"Here goes, then," he said; "now you take hold of my hand very tight, and we will go down as far as we can; then we'll lie down on the grass, you put your arms round my neck, and we will slide down."

So it was done, not without danger; but Hugh was strong and steady; and lying on his face with one arm round the child, he held on to the tufts of grass, and let himself slide as gently as he could. Still his heart beat fast for an instant when, on reaching the steepest point of the slope, they slipped down with a rush the last fifteen feet to the ledge where Amy lay, half over the brink of the sheer fall below.

"Now, Pussy, you sit down quite quiet while I see to cousin Amy."

Very anxiously the young artist lifted the girl's head from the grass. There was a little pool of blood below it, which had flowed from a wound just above the ear. He put his fingers to her wrist, and, after a minute of anxious suspense, he felt a very faint flickering pulse.

"Thank God!" he murmured devoutly.

Then he took out a whisky-flask, and poured a few drops between the clinched teeth. Again and again he did this, the child all the time sitting perfectly quiet, and watching with quiet frightened eyes. Presently the girl sighed faintly.

"Take hold of cousin Amy's hand," Hugh said, "and when you see her open her eyes speak to her gently. Tell her to lie still; put your face close to hers, so that she may see you when she opens her eyes."

Hugh was sitting on the ground supporting the girl, whose head rested on his shoulder. Presently there was a movement of the eyelids, and then slowly and languidly the eyes opened.

"There, cousin Amy, you are better now. Lie quite quiet. You have hurt yourself, and must be very good."

The eyes expressed recognition and a faint wonder, and then closed again. Hugh waited a little, and then poured a few more drops of whisky between her lips. This time the effect was more decided. She moved, shook her head, and tried to avoid the mouth of the flask. Then she looked up again.

"What is it?" she said faintly. "What are you doing? Where am I?"

"You must be quiet and good," the child said positively. "You must not move, the gentleman says so."

This time the speech was vaguely understood, for she looked beyond the child's face to that of Hugh; closed her eyes again, as if she doubted them; looked again, and then made an effort to raise her head. Then Hugh spoke, gently but decidedly:

"My dear young lady, you must lie quite quiet. You have fallen down and hurt yourself, and you are faint and weak. You are quite safe where you are, but you cannot move, for we are on the side of the hill, and must wait till help comes. Your cousin is here with you. Kiss her, Pussy."

Amy Herbert listened in a sort of confused wonder. She did not understand in the least, except that she was told to be quiet in firm authoritative tones, such as had not been addressed to her since she was a child. The warm kiss of her little cousin seemed to assure her that all was safe and right, and, with a little sigh she closed her eyes again, and was soon breathing quietly. Then the child turned to Hugh.

"Amy's gone to sleep. My name isn't Pussy, but Ida—Ida Herbert."

"All right, Ida. I'll call you so in future. Now, Ida, when you stand up, can you see the road down below there?"

"Just see it," the child said; "but it is getting dark. When are we going home?"

"I am afraid we are not going home to-night, Ida. Certainly not unless some one comes along that road, and there is not much chance of that."

"Where are we to sleep?" Ida asked, in surprise.

"We must sleep just where we are. Cousin Amy will sleep here, and you shall curl up close to me and lay your head against me on the other side, and I don't think you'll be cold."

"But I want supper before I go to bed."

"Ah, you can't have supper to-night, Ida; but it will be great fun, you know, sleeping out here for a bit, and I expect that presently your mamma will send peo-

ple out to look for you, and then we shall hear them shout, and we shall shout back again; and then they'll come with some ropes, and up we shall go to the top. Now shall I tell you a story?"

"O, yes, please," Ida said, delighted.

"Will you sit quiet by me, then? and when you feel sleepy you just lay your head down and go off to sleep. I will go on with my story till you're asleep; but we must talk very low, else we shall wake cousin Amy."

For an hour he told stories of fairies and enchanters, and then the little head leaned gradually against his waistcoat, and in five minutes he stopped in the middle of his narrative. Then Amy Herbert spoke:

"I am not asleep; I have been awake for some time, and have been thinking. You are the gentleman who rescued Ida off the rocks, are you not?"

"Yes," Hugh said.

"I thought so. Now, please, how came you and Ida here, and where are we, and why don't we go home?"

"You rolled down a steep grassy slope on to a ledge. You struck your head in falling, and were insensible for a time. I came up, and should have run off for assistance, but I feared if you moved before I came back you would fall over another fifty feet, so I took Ida and slipped down to you."

"Can't I move?" the girl asked, presently.

"Are you uncomfortable?"

"No," she said shyly.

"Then you had better lie still," Hugh said decisively. "The ledge is very narrow, and you are weak, and I dare say giddy, for you lost a great deal of blood. So you really might fall over if you sat up. With my arm round you, you are quite safe."

And Hugh emphasized the fact by drawing her still more closely to him. Her slight figure yielded to the pressure, and with a little movement, which was very like the nestle with which Ida had prefaced her subsidence to sleep, Amy Herbert lay quiet, and in a very few minutes Hugh was sure, from her regular breathing, that she too was asleep.

"It must be nearly ten o'clock," Hugh said to himself. "I should think we ought very soon to get out of this. The old lady will be fidgety by half-past seven, alarmed by half-past eight, and by half-past nine she ought to have all Barmouth out with torches. But women are so long before they set about a thing in earnest. They begin to fidget long before a man does; but they don't set to work to take decided steps. Still, searchers ought to be out by this time. I am beginning to feel horribly cramped. I suppose some fellows would like this sort of thing, but I don't see any point in it whatever."

In another quarter of an hour Hugh saw several lights coming along the road below, and could hear faint shouts, which seemed to be echoed by a party proceeding along the hill. They were moving but slowly, for there were lights half-way up the face, and they were evidently searching very carefully. The wind was from them, and it was useless for Hugh to try and return their shouts. Gradually they got nearer, and he determined to make an effort, but to do so it was necessary to stand up. He moved slightly, and the elder girl moved also.

"Wake up, please," he said; "help is at hand."

She raised herself at once.

"I do think I have been asleep. I feel ever so much better."

"I will stand up to shout," Hugh said. "Will you lean back against the hill? I will lay your cousin down with her head in your lap. She is as sound as a top. Now for it!" and standing up, Hugh gave a shout with all the power of his lungs.

There was a pause in the movement of the lanterns, and then a shout.

"Hallo-a-a!" Hugh shouted again; "this way!"

Rapidly the lanterns came flittering along the road till they were down in front of them.

"Here we are! here are the ladies!" Hugh shouted.

"Any one hurt?"

"Not much; but we can't get either up or down.

You must let a rope down to us from above. Here we are;" and Hugh struck a match and lighted a large piece of paper. "Have the party above got ropes?"

There was shouting backward and forward, but the party above had not got ropes.

"Send back for them at once," Hugh shouted, "and be sure and tell the lady that no damage is done here."

"How do you feel now?—I was going to say cousin Amy," he laughed; "but I really haven't the pleasure of knowing your name."

"Amy Herbert."

"How do you feel now, Miss Herbert?"

"I feel weak, and rather headachy," she said; "but there is nothing really the matter with me. What an escape I have had!"

"Yes, you had a narrow squeak of it," Hugh said frankly; "just another pound or two of impetus and you would have gone over the ledge."

She was silent, and he went on:

"You must excuse this absurd shyness of mine. I never had any sisters, and so, you see, I never got in the way of talking to girls. It is very annoying sometimes, and makes people think me a bear. I suppose you thought so. You must have done so."

"Yes," Amy said. "I did think you rather a bear. I am not accustomed to shy young men, and simply fancied you did not want to speak to strangers. And now, please tell me exactly what happened, because I shall have to tell aunt, and I have only a confused idea of what has taken place."

Again Hugh told her the facts.

"Then I owe my life to you," the girl said, when he had finished.

"I really don't think you do," Hugh said, in a matter-of-fact way. "I question very much if you would have come round out of your faint before I could have brought help from Barmouth. However, of course, I acted for the best, and it avoided all risk. There was no danger in getting down to you; the little one and I slipped down as easily as possible. If I thought you

were going to tell me to-morrow that you were very grateful, or anything of that sort, I give you my honor I should go right away by the coach to Carnarvon."

The girl felt by the tone of Hugh's voice, that there was no affectation about him, that he really meant what he said.

"I may just say 'thank you,' now?" she asked quietly.

"Yes, just 'thank you,' " he said lightly.

"If I were a man you would shake hands over it?" the girl asked.

"Yes," Hugh said.

"Please give me your hand."

He stooped down, and she put her hand into his.

"Thank you," in a deep, quiet, earnest voice.

Then, as he rose again, she went on, in a changed voice:

"Now mind, it is a bargain. We have shaken hands on it. I am not to be grateful, and you are not to be afraid of me, but are just to be as natural with me as with Ida."

"That is a bargain," Hugh said, with a laugh. "I don't think I shall feel shy with you in the future. I never talked so much with a woman in my life. I suppose it's because I can't see your face."

"I don't know whether to take that for a compliment or the reverse," Amy laughed.

"The reverse, of course," Hugh said, laughing, too; "compliments are not in my line. Ah, here they are with the rope. They have been precious quick about it." And Amy Herbert felt there was a real compliment in the tones in which he spoke. "Now you must wake Ida. How soundly she sleeps! Now let me help you on to your feet."

Even with the aid of the rope it was a work of considerable difficulty to get Amy Herbert up to the top of the slope; for she was weak and shaken, and unable to do much to help herself. At last it was managed; and then she was helped down a steep path close by to the road below, where a carriage from the hotel was waiting for them.

"Will you come up and see my aunt?" Amy asked, as they stopped at the door.

"Not to-night, thank you. I will come in the morning to see how you are after the shake; and, please," he said, "tell your aunt of our bargain. It would be awful to come up to be thanked."

"Good-night," the girl said. "I won't forget. Come early. Now, Ida, come along; you will soon be in bed."

Two months later Mr. Herbert was walking up and down his breakfast-room in a towering passion. Amy was sitting in a great arm-chair.

"It is monstrous, it is incredible," Mr. Herbert exclaimed. "Here you, for whom I have looked for a capital match, who refused three of the very best men in the district last year, are away for two months and a half at this beggarly Welsh village, and you come back and deliberately tell me that you have engaged yourself to an artist, a fellow I never heard of."

"Dear old daddy," Amy said quietly, "don't get angry about it. Come and sit down and talk it over reasonably, as you always do things with me."

"No, no, Amy. I know what your reasonable talking means. I am not to be coaxed or wheedled or made a fool of. It's all very well when you want a pair of new ponies or anything of that kind you have set your mind on, but there is a limit to everything."

"Well, but we must talk the question over, daddy."

"Not at all, not at all; no talk is necessary. You tell me you want to marry this fortune-hunting artist. I say at once I won't hear of it; that it's out of the question; that I will not hear a single word about such a ridiculous affair."

"Now, why should you call him a fortune-hunter?" Amy said, seizing at once upon the weak point. "He has not an idea that there is any fortune in the case. He saw me staying in poky lodgings at Barmouth, and beyond the fact that I live at Manchester, he knows nothing. He tells me that he has enough for us to

live on very quietly, in addition to his profession. So, you see, he can't be called a fortune-hunter."

"Well, well, it makes no matter. The thing is monstrous, and I will not hear of it."

"Well, daddy, I will do just as you like, and I won't say any more about it now; but, of course, to-morrow I must talk about it, because it is out of the question that I should break my word which I have given, and should make him unhappy, and be awfully unhappy myself. So I shall have to talk about him, and you will have to listen"—the father had sat down now—"because though, as my papa, you have a perfect right to say, 'I will not consent to your marrying this man,' still, you know, I must talk about a thing which is making me very unhappy. And it will be so much better and nicer, daddy," and she went over to him now and sat herself down on his knee, with her arm round his neck, "if you give in at once. Because, you know, you can't keep in a naughty temper with me long; and besides, you would be very unhappy if I was unhappy; and at last, you know very well, you will have to give up being cruel and cross, and will tell me to be happy my own way."

"Amy," her father said, trying to look very stern, "I have spoiled you. I have allowed you to tyrannize over me."

"No, daddy, I can't allow that,—certainly not tyrannize. I have led you for your own good, and you have been as happy as the day is long—"

"And now," he continued, ignoring the protest, "I am to reap the reward of my folly. That you should have married a man of high rank I expected; had you married a first-rate man of business I should have been contented. But an artist!"

"Well, daddy, we won't talk any more about it to-day. Now I'll just smooth those naughty cross wrinkles, and I'll kiss you on each cheek and the middle of your nose. There, now it looks like itself. There! ten o'clock striking, and you not off! Mind, I shall expect you up to luncheon."

So Mr. Herbert went off shaking his head, and although still determined, yet, at heart, very doubtful as to his power of resistance. Amy went to her special sanctum, and wrote her first letter to Hugh. The following sentences show that she had no doubt whatever on the subject:

"Daddy does not take quite kindly to the notion as yet. He doesn't know you, you see, and it has of course come upon him a little suddenly; but he is the very best and kindest of all the daddies in the world, and in a very few days he will see it in quite the right light. It is of no use your writing or coming to me here till he is quite reasonable; but I expect by this day week to have everything arranged. I will let you know what train to come by, and will meet you at the station."

It is to be presumed that Amy thoroughly understood her father; but at any rate, it was exactly that day week that Hugh Carson, having obeyed instructions, and got out at the station directed, five miles from Manchester, was a little surprised and much disappointed at not seeing her upon the platform.

"Your luggage, Sir! Are you the gentleman for the Hawthorns? Very well, Sir, I will send up the portmanteau: Miss Herbert is in the pony-carriage."

"Bless me, Amy," Hugh said, after the first greeting, as they drove off, "you used to talk about your pony-trap, but this turnout is pretty enough to attract attention in the park. Amy," and he looked at her with a puzzled glance, "you're not a swell, are you? —because that would be dreadful."

"Well, Hugh, if being a swell means having lots of money, I suppose I am one, for daddy has lots upon lots. He's got cotton-mills, you know. But there's nothing dreadful in that."

"You ought to have told me, Amy," Hugh said, a little gravely.

"*Pas si bête*," the girl said. "In the first place, it was nice to know that you fell in love with me without knowing whether I had a halfpenny; in the second

place, you would very likely have run away if you had thought I was rich; and to tell you the truth, Master Hugh, I had no idea of letting you run away. There, Hugh, there's the house; isn't it pretty?"

"It's almost a palace," Hugh said in dismay.

"Yes; and there's papa at the door waiting to greet you. Now, look quite pleasant and bright, Hugh, for, of course, I want him to like you almost as much as I do."

Positions are sometimes more responsible, and it requires more ability to fill them, than appears upon the surface. The railroad president in the following anonymous story evidently thought an engineer's work was a comparative sinecure; but he lived to see that even a fireman has more to do than he had thought of. It is to be hoped that the tale is true.

249 A HARDWORKED FIREMAN.

Did you ever hear of a railway president running as fireman on an engine? Well, I know of one who did, and, if you've got time to listen to it, I will tell you the story now.

It was in the summer of 1885 that I was firing on a single track line that runs up from Junction City through Georgetown, a matter of 110 miles. The line was owned mostly by a man named Thedford, who was president and superintendent all in one.

I had been firing on the line for two years back; all the time with one driver, Bob Hunter by name, and a finer man never lived. I suppose it would be only natural for me to speak well of Bob, anyway, for I was clean head over ears in love with his pretty daughter, Molly, and was only waiting for a bit of rise in my pay to make her Mrs. Jim Martin. Though I didn't see any chance for that rise where I was, I didn't like to leave and go on another line, for that would take me away from Molly.

One day Bob says to me:

"Jim, ain't you and Molly never going to get married?"

"Just as soon as I can get my rise," says I; "but I don't see how I'm going to get it here."

"Why don't you go and ask Billy," says he.

You see, Billy was always what we called Mr. Thedford—behind his back, of course—for warrant you we were mighty polite to his face.

"He won't do anything for me," says I, "for you

know either one of the cleaners up to Georgetown would be glad enough to jump into my place, and he ain't going to give me a rise just to please me."

"Well," says Bob, "it won't do any hurt to try it."

So next day I washed up and went to the company's office, and asked for Mr. Thedford. After a few minutes he sent word to me that he would see me, and in I went. There he sat—a large, heavily built man, with big side whiskers and a pair of gold rimmed glasses on his nose.

"What is it, my man? I'm very busy," says he.

So I up and told him what I wanted.

"How much are you getting now?" says he.

"Forty-five dollars a month," says I.

Then he pursed up his lips, and hemmed and hawed a little, and says:

"I don't see how we can give you anything more, my good fellow. You see yours is not a very responsible position; merely one that requires a little bodily strength. And we can find plenty of men who would be only too glad to take your place at that salary."

With that he turned to a letter he was writing, and I knew I had no more business there. I tell you I felt sore to be told it didn't take much to know how to fire an engine, and I came mighty near throwing my job up and trying to get it on another line. But Molly persuaded me to hold on a little longer.

Now, before I come to the particular point of this yarn, I want to tell you a little about the line. I have said it was a single track one running from Junction City to Georgetown. The latter place was a little town of 500 or 600 inhabitants; but in summer a great many Chicago people came up there, and so I suppose the line paid. Anyhow, Thedford, who had a summer place there, was rich enough to run it for himself alone if he wanted to.

Bob lived at Georgetown and I boarded with him. Our trips began at 8 in the morning, and we generally ran the 110 miles in five hours. Then at 3 in the afternoon we came back, getting home at 8. As soon as

we reached the roundhouse at Georgetown our day's work was over, for the cleaners took the engine then, cleaned and polished her, and laid the fire all ready to start the next morning.

Well, as I said, I hung on to my job, hoping that something would turn up that would give me a lift, till one day in August. The whole summer had been uncommon hot, but that day went ahead of anything I ever saw. Of course while we were running we had a breeze, but the minute we stopped it seemed as if we were in a furnace, and naturally, working as we were near a hot fire didn't improve things.

On the home trip Bob was taken sick and had all he could do to hold out till we got to the home station, when he got home as soon as possible. After the train was emptied I ran the engine to the roundhouse, expecting to go straight home and wash up. But when I ran the engine in the first thing I saw was my two cleaners laid out on a heap of ashes, dead drunk.

Here was a pretty mess, for it would certainly take me until midnight to get the machine in proper trim for the next day's run; and a hot, greasy job it was in any weather, but on such a night as that it was frightful to think of it. However, there was no help for it, and I started in.

I had barely made a beginning when I heard some one coming in at the door. Looking up I saw that it was Billy Thedford. In a very excited voice he asked where Hunter was.

"Home," I said, "and so sick he can't hold his head up."

"Heavens!" said he; "I shall be ruined!"

Then he went on to say that if he wasn't in Chicago the next day, some deal, I think he called it, would fall through, and it would cost him a quarter of a million.

"There's a train goes through Junction City at eleven-five that will get you to Chicago in time," says I.

"What good'll that do me?" says he. "I've been away for two days, and only just now got the telegram. If Hunter was here he might get me down;

but as it is I may as well go home and let the money go."

"Mr. Thedford," said I, "Bob is sick, but I can run this machine to Junction City in time to connect with the train you want; but you will have to fire for me, as my two cleaners are drunk, as you see, and there isn't another man in this village knows the engine from the tender hardly."

I hope that I have been forgiven that lie, for there were two or three men that could have fired all right, but it struck me all of a sudden that here was a fine chance to get even with Billy, and let him see whether it took any knowhow to fire an engine for a 110 miles run. It so happened that we had just wooded up on the home trip at a little station three miles from Georgetown, so we had plenty of fuel aboard to make the run with.

"Can you do it?" says he. "Remember it is 110 miles, and it is 8:30 now, so you have only two and a half hours to make the run that generally takes double that time."

"I can do it," says I, "if you will jump aboard, pull off your coat, and do just as I tell you."

No sooner said than done, and in ten minutes we had the old engine on the turntable, turned her around and were off.

If the road was rough when we ran at our usual speed, that night, making double time, it was just awful. As we flew around the curves it seemed as if we should lose the track at every turn of the drivers, and the poor old machine rocked and swayed so that, used as I was to it, I could hardly keep on my seat by the lever.

If it was hard on me, what must it have been to poor old Billy? I could hardly keep from laughing in his face, as I watched him and heard him groan as he handled the heavy sticks we used for fuel.

The heat of the weather, added to that of the furnace and the unusual work, made him look as if he was in a Turkish bath. The water ran down his face, his stiff,

white collar hung down on his shoulders like a wet rag, and his beautiful, smooth shirt bosom looked as if some one had thrown a pail of dirty water over him. His hands were torn and cut, from handling the wood, and take it altogether he was the most unlikely looking railway president I ever saw. Once in awhile I had to shout at him to lay the wood more even in the furnace, and would tell him he would get the knack of it in time.

Whenever he tried to rest I told him we were losing steam, and if he wanted to catch that train, he mustn't idle over the work. If I had thought to hitch a car on when we started we should have run much smoother; but it was too late to think of that now, and so on we rushed, now through woodlands, now past grain fields, lurching first to one side and then to the other, until I expected every minute to land wrong side up in the ditch.

However, luck was with us that night, and we pulled up at Junction City at just 11. Poor old Billy could hardly climb down from the engine, but he managed to gasp out:

"Come to my office at 2 o'clock next Saturday."

I learned afterward that, finding the Chicago train was behind time, he hunted up a clothing shop and rigged himself out so as to look like a civilized man, which he didn't when he left me.

I managed to find a fireman who was willing to make the run back with me, and I finally got home at 3 o'clock, and finding the cleaners a little sobered up, got to bed as soon as possible, for I was clean played out. I told Bob about my trip next day, and thought he would die laughing to think of old Billy playing fireman. But all he said was:

"I'm afraid that'll settle your hash, Jim, for he will find out that you worked him more than was needed."

The next Saturday, at 2 o'clock, I reported at the president's office, wondering whether I was going to be rewarded for my extra work or kicked out for my impudence.

When I entered the office, there sat the old man, spick and span as ever and showing no signs of his hard work.

"Well, young man," says he, "you helped me out the other night, but I would not go through the same experience again for $10,000. At the same time I think you were trying to get even with me for not doing what you asked about your salary, and I have concluded that this line can dispense with your services."

At this my heart went down into my boots, for I can tell you it isn't an easy thing to get a new job when you can't bring a recommendation from your last place.

Then he went on to say:

"I have a letter here from the superintendent of the Chicago and Western, asking me if I can recommend to them a driver who has a sharp eye and cool head to run their new fast night express. I have written in reply that I can recommend such a man, one James Martin, who will report for service the 1st of September. The pay will be $100 a month. I may add to you privately that I shall never apply to you for the position of fireman. Good day, sir."

That's all there is to my story. Molly and I were married and went to Chicago to live. I took the new train, and have brought her in on time every trip I've run, so you can see I've a pretty good record with the company. I've never seen Billy since, and I don't believe he wants to see me; for Bob told me last time I saw him that they all called the old man "Martin's Fireman;" that he knew it, and naturally didn't like it. There's my mate signaling for me now, sir, and I must go.

Direxia seems to have combined in herself the best traits of her northern ancestry and of her southern environment. Perhaps the innate majesty of a right aspiration amid what are to outsiders humorously discouraging surroundings, but which were far otherwise to poor Direxia, has never been more pathetically and powerfully shown than in this story, which has been written for ROMANCE by H. L. Sargent.

DIREXIA.

It was a great change for Eliezer Denham and his wife Eunice to go from Maine to Arkansas to live; but a distant cousin, who had enticed them thither early in the fifties, helped them through their "chills," and put in their first "craps" for them. It took them a long time to become acclimated, and two of their four children died in the process. It seemed for a while as though Direxia and Cyrus, the remaining two, must succumb also, but they were evidently made of sterner stuff than the others, for they came out strong and healthy in the end—as health went on the Allowee River.

It was a little black, unhealthy-looking river, very different from the sparkling, rapid New England streams to which the Denhams were accustomed; but they gradually became used to it, and, in a way, proud of it, for they soon learned that it was the centre of everything in their new home. The cluster of houses, a mile or more away from Eliezer's modest, not to say shackly, farmhouse, was known as Allowee Fo' Corners. The rolling elevations in the distance were the Allowee Hills, the county was Allowee County, and the people were "Allowee Folks." By the time that Eliezer and his wife had lived among the Allowee Folks for ten years, they were as much a part of them as though they had been born there. Eunice "dipped" with zest, and Eliezer, who had been guiltless of tobacco in their Maine home, went about now with his mouth full, and with the regulation Allowee rivulets of tawny juice

oozing from each end of that irregular orifice. They were naturalized now without a doubt, though they still retained the industrious and orderly habits of their old home.

It was amusing to hear the Yankee and the Arkansas idioms struggling for the mastery in the speech of Eliezer and Eunice during these ten years. They had been plain, poor farmer-folk up in Maine, and their talk had been the essence of New England dialect, uncorrupted by the learning of the schools, of which neither of them had had more than a weather-beaten red schoolhouse, dating back to Revolutionary times, had given them. Direxia and the baby Cyrus grew up with a pretty straight Allowee vernacular.

Direxia, at fifteen, was long, lank, hollow-cheeked and hollow-chested,—a typical Arkansas girl. She had ceased to attend school at the log-schoolhouse, and was engaged to "stan' up" in a few weeks with Derry Driggs, the twenty-year-old son of a neighboring planter, of about the same status as Eliezer Denham. She was of the sort that matures early in body but late in mind. Outside, though it was different inside, she had taken on the semblance of the girls about her. Her dark hair was drawn back tightly from her face, and done into a "waterfall" at the back, which was in its turn covered with a "net." Thus there was, as Mr. Howells says, ample scope afforded for the expression of character. And Direxia had character. Her full, rather bulging forehead, long, curving nose, and square chin showed this. But chiefly her eyes, gray, deep-set, and glowing, revealed, even in the undeveloped state in which she remained when she married Derry Driggs, that there was a gleam of fire in her, inherited from some New England ancestor. She was true to the core to the State of her adoption, and would not have admitted the New England strain: but it was there, and in due course of time it came out.

One evening in early October, Direxia and her husband, who was universally known along the Allowee as "Dank" Driggs, were sitting in front of a bright pine-

knot blaze. It had come on to be chilly since the sun went down, and Dank had graciously seconded Direxia's suggestion that they should have a fire, since she evidently proposed to make it herself. They had been married five years now, and there were two children, who were properly sleeping at this moment in their trundle-bed.

As Direxia went out to gather a fresh apronful from the pile of loose "wood-trash" which lay beside the door outside, a carriage rolled by. It contained a lady, a fine-looking elderly gentleman, and two or three young people. Direxia knew that they were Judge Burnley and his family, and that they were from the county town of Thrall ("T'rall"), ten miles away.

She came in, threw the contents of her apron upon the little fire which she had started, and then sat down reflectively in its light. Dank was smoking stupidly.

"Yer a ornary houn', Dank," began Direxia at last with perfect good-nature.

Dank dropped his smoking and looked at her out of his wide, gentle eyes, which sat in his hairy face like twin lakes in a region of unrestrained brushwood.

"I don' come at what you-uns er aimin' after," he admitted frankly.

"Yer promised me ye'd nail that clapboard, that's been hangin' off this six months, and tinker that front door so't I could shet it. An' hyar comes along the quality from T'rall, ridin' in their carriages, an' seein' it all, same's we-uns was ornary niggers. Pap don' hev no sech goin's on,—not if mammy's roun', he don'."

"I ben so durn druv, Rexy," pleaded her husband, tacitly admitting the justice of her rebuke.

Direxia sighed.

"Taint that," she said, shaking her head as though the problem was one which she had long wrestled with, and had found difficult. "Taint that. It's long o' yer bein' Allowee folks. Lord knows they-uns all got thayer clapboards hangin', an' thayer doors out o' j'int. I 'lowed when I was little that *everybody* was thataway. Pappy was a heap more keerful'n the rest,—but *he*

warnt so durn keerful nayther. An' when I come to go to T'rall,—when I got big enough so's I warnt skeert to death, an' could notice how thay-uns had things,—then I see't wa'n't any need o' this yer lettin' things go so,—no more'n o' lettin' things go in the house yer. They's plenty as says taint no use tryin' to keep a *kitchen* up right along,—but you-uns know, Dank, *I* kin do it. It's shif'lesness, when women-folks can't. I heern my mammy tell how up to Maine, whar she was raised, they have things slick right along. Lord knows, Dank, I hate the Yankees bad as you-uns do. My uncle Gid up thar, he wrote my pap the meanest kyind of a letter. He called him a 'clay-eater,' an' Lord knows what, long o' his writin' up thar that they-uns better not be helpin' our niggers to git to Canady. Oh, he run on jest turrible. We-uns don' kyar for Maine,—but min' you, Dank, they-uns has things slick up thar, mammy says."

Dank gave a sleepy, indifferent grunt. Direxia bestowed a reproachful look at his hairy face in the flickering light.

"You-uns was a turrible smart scholar, down to the ole schoolhouse, when I fust knowed ye, Dank," she began again reflectively.

Dank grinned.

"So I heern ye say, Rexy," he acknowledged with shame-faced delight.

"Yes," went on Direxia, still musingly, "I 'lowed ye was goin' to turn out a powerful smart man, somehow. I do' know what I thought ye was goin' fer to do, but I reckoned ye was goin' fer to do somethin' o' yuther."

Dank was not so happy now, but he still gazed at his wife kindly enough from under his shock of black hair.

"Lawyers seems to be powerful likely sort o' fellers," she pursued tentatively. "I 'low ye never let on, Dank, how as ever ye could be a lawyer now?"

There was a pathetic look on Direxia's colorless face which gave her large features a certain softness. It seemed to touch her impassive husband as he watched her curiously in the light of the fire.

"Sho, now, Rexy!" he began deprecatingly, "who'd ever 'a 'lowed ye was thinkin' thataway!"

"I heern Jedge Burnley down to T'rall, you know, talkin' how if the Yanks don' quit foolin' with we-uns' niggers, we-uns was goin' fer to give hit ter 'em—an' them other fellers talked too, an' they said they was mostly lawyers. Ever since then I've thought a heap about they-uns. They had on good clo'es, Dank, and they talked so sort o' perlite like,—it was nice. I remembered how you-uns used to speak pieces down to the schoolhouse, an' I 'lowed ye could have made a likely speech same as they-uns, if you was only a lawyer long o' them. What do they have to do, Dank, to be a lawyer? Couldn't *you* be a lawyer?"

"Oh, gawnamighty, Rexy!" cried her husband, appalled by the height of her ambitions, "you-uns are crazy,—fer a fac', I 'low ye be! Why, gal, lawyers has to shave ev'ry durn day o' their lives, an' ye said yerself they had to wear good clo'es. An' they have to read stiddy, I reckon, in them great leather-covered books on a shelf in the court-house. I 'low it takes 'em nigh onto a lifetime to git to be a reg'lar lawyer,—an' most on 'em has to go to college, an' Lord knows what all. Then they've got to be 'admitted to the bar,'—I don't rightly yunderstan' it, Rexy, but thar's a heap o' trash like that yer. Why, thar wan't never none o' my folks lawyers. I couldn't be a lawyer, no more 'n I could be a—a—dawg, Rexy. Who'd take keer o' you-uns, an' the young uns in thar, ef I was to go off tryin' to be a lawyer! I reckon all the folks on the Allowee would think I'd gone plumb crazy!" Dank gave a great guffaw, and relapsed into the depths of his whiskers again, whence clouds of smoke soon began to reissue, indicating that he was regaining his composure after the excitement to which his wife's insane fancies had subjected him.

Direxia sighed a long, quivering sigh. Nobody would know how she had tried, since she had married, and had begun to think, as she had never done in her slow, unripe girlhood, to work out a grand destiny for her

yielding, good-natured husband—in her mind. He had been a good scholar for Allowee folks—as she had said, and as she had grown older, and had begun to dimly comprehend the little world in which she lived, on which a new light had been thrown by her motherhood, she had begun to long for a glimpse into the enchanted region in which it seemed to her that these people from T'rall must live. If her little "Voylet," and the baby Earl could go with such people, could ride in such carriages,—why, life would be a different thing to them from what it was to her, and to the dull and earthy folk along the river-valley. Thus dimly she had groped through mazes of reasoning, until she had come to the conclusion that if Dank could occupy a different station in life, her children's future would be assured.

Her husband marked the frown of reflection which still lingered upon her brow.

"Yer pappy'd laugh, I reckon, Rexy, if I should tell him what you-uns been sayin' to me," he began at length, hoping good-humoredly to dissipate the shadows which hung about her.

"Don't ye tell him," she exclaimed earnestly, "now don't ye go fur to be that mean!"

He promised her, chuckling over the idea of her pappy's dismay, if his daughter's wild project should ever reach his ears,—but she paid no heed to his mirth. She was in the grasp of what, for the region of the Allowee, were profound emotions.

"Ye see, somehow, Dank," she began after a moment's thought, "I'm sick sometimes o' bein' jest nobody down yer in Allowee County. Pap an' mammy,—they think I'm jest stuck-up an' bigotty, but I aint. I don't begretch nothin' to Jedge Burnley's folks, only I kin see plain enough that they have a heap better times than we-uns do. All we-uns do is jest gittin' up in the mawnin' an' fryin' a mess fer breakfast, an' then crawlin roun', an' washin' up, an' such-like, an' then fryin' another mess fer dinner, an' then walkin' out, likely, down to Pappy's, or the Fo' Corners or such a matter, an' then fryin' another mess fer supper, an'

then goin' to bed. Then the's goin' to church, an' camp-meetin'. That's better, but seems to me, they-uns gets a heap more outen livin' than we-uns do."

"Likely," admitted Dank, yawning immoderately, but without a thought of disrespect to his wife. "Most I 'low now, Rexy, is I've got to tote that truck to the Fo' Corners an' git it started fer Memphis bright an' soon in the mawnin',"—and Dank shuffled off to bed.

Direxia pondered over the coals a little longer. Then, with a long sigh, she raked them up and was soon asleep beside him. She never approached her husband again upon the subject of changing his vocation; but when the carriages of the "quality" rolled by her humble cabin, she would look after them longingly and secretly cherish the hope that had sprung up in her proud heart that her children might enjoy this better living, of which she had caught glimpses in her poor starved soul, even if she and her husband were to be forever denied it.

When little Earl was two years old, the war broke out. Dank Driggs was very "f'erce" at first, as the Allowee Folks expressed it, and one night he and Direxia rode over to T'rall to hear Judge Burnley and the other "lawyers" recite the outrages to which the South had been subjected by the North, and to urge the young men to enlist. Direxia came home burning hot.

"You-uns got to go, Dank," she said when they were fairly started on the ride home.

Even her husband's phlegmatic temperament had been stirred. He "reckoned likely" he should, "after a spell."

"You-uns got to go now," insisted Direxia shrilly.

"Lord, Rexy," protested Dank, feebly, "who gwine put in the craps fer you-uns? Ye'll starve, likely, lessen I put to an' seed awhile."

Direxia yielded and gave him a fortnight's grace. Each night he was so weary with the incessant application which she required that he could not even get over to the Fo' Corners for his nightly dram,—a serious loss to his comfort. At the end of the two weeks, though

his work was far from done, as he declared, he enlisted with a recruiting agent who came around, and left Direxia to manage the farm as best she might.

That year another little one came, suffered awhile and died. Direxia struggled on. The children helped her in the fields, and her house, which it had been her pride to keep neat, she left largely to manage itself. The second year Dank came home. He was heartily sick of soldiering, and sighed for the flesh-pots of his own home again, but there was a draft, and he found himself back in the field, where he staid until the end of the war, with only occasional and brief visits to the Allowee. Dank never rebelled against authority. Like so many of the southern "pore whites," to which class he really belonged, though far better off than many of them, he was gentle and yielding to the point of effeminacy.

In 1865 Dank returned home for good,—poor but happy. He wore a corporal's stripe on his sleeve, and felt mightily set up thereby. There was another baby now, and Direxia had managed the farm so well that it was in better condition than it had ever been under Dank's supervision.

One summer evening Dank was just starting for the Fo' Corners, when Direxia, who was getting worried at the habit of heavy drinking which he had acquired in the army, persuaded him to sit down outside a moment and listen to the reciting of a "piece" by Voylet, who was growing up a bright and forward little maiden with more of beauty than her poor mother had ever possessed. Dank listened with a glow of fatherly pride, and after the child had been sent to bed, having lingered so long and so comfortably that he felt loath to rise, he sat on, smoking assiduously.

"Hit's mighty pleasant to have ye roun' again, Dank," said Direxia, contemplating him, if not with wifely pride, with at least some degree of affection.

"Hit's mighty nice to be here, Rexy," responded Dank with profound civility.

"I 'low you-uns did right well, comin' off a corp'ral

so," continued Direxia, with a slight interrogative inflection in her tone.

"I reckon," rejoined Dank complacently.

"I 'lowed ye'd come home a gineral, shore, Dank," pursued his wife. Then, seeing that she had offended him, she added hastily, "but hit's powerful smart in you-uns to git to be a corp'ral. They ain't many did so well in Allowee County."

Dank simply grunted.

"Don' you-uns git some lan' or—or somethin'—some extra pay o' yuther, fer bein' corp'ral, Dank, now the war's over?" she asked a moment later.

"Women-folks is durn fools," remarked Dank impersonally, taking time to blow out a cloud of smoke before he deigned to notice her question. "Why, gal, haint ye sensed it that we-uns are mustered out now? They ain't no army no more. Lord! We haint drawed no pay,—not fer a year or more! I reckon we-uns 'bleeged to count ourselves lucky to git off with our skins, and to have farms to settle down on! 'Extry pay!' Wal,—not much!"

But Direxia was not to be driven from her main point, even by such scorn as this.

"Dank, tell me this," she began a moment later, "an' I won't pester you-uns no more. Ain' a corp'ral as big as a jedge now?"

"Hit's diffrunt," began Dank philosophically, after something of a pause.

"Yes, hit's diffrunt," she repeated eagerly, "but ain't it somethin' like? Don't corp'rals go to Congress, an' git to be somebody more'n Allowee Folks?"

"Huccom ye sech a durn fool!" he cried savagely—for him,—"I caynt make out head nor tail to yer talk nohow. I 'low I'm allers goin' to live down yer on the Allowee now I've got back yer. Hit was good enough for my pap, an' your pap, an' hit's good enough fer me. Go to Congress! Lord! They ain' any southerners goin' to Congress for one while, not if they-uns up Nawth can help it, you bet! Congress! I 'low ye're goin' crazy, shore, Rexy!"

Dank rose and shuffled off to the Fo' Corners, whence he returned very drunk two or three hours later. The last spark of hope in Direxia's heart that the social position of herself and her children was ever to be bettered by her husband was out.

She devoted herself now to the training of her children, and almost spoiled her health and her head in trying to help them—and she had some dim notion of helping herself also,—in the long evenings when Dank was away with his mates, and the younger children were asleep. Then a fifth child came, but though Direxia tended him with feverish care, he sickened and died before he was three years old. The one next older, the brightest and prettiest of them all, a boy on whom she had set bright hopes, followed him. Earl was heavy-faced, gentle and forceless like his father: but Direxia would not admit even to herself that he was not so "likely" as "Voylet."

At fifteen Voylet was a beauty for the Allowee. She had learned, her fond mother told her neighbors, everything that could be learned in the valley, and in the fall she was going to T'rall to school. By saving and pinching, in the true New England fashion,—though Direxia might have stopped it if she had suspected that she was copying so reprehensible a model,—she had amassed a little fund, to which she was constantly adding, by the most incessant labor, for the education of her children. No lawyer, nor anybody else, she was determined, should hold his head above her children, on account of superior knowledge. With an innate acuteness which seized the best of the conclusions at which she arrived by slow and painful mental processes, and held them fast, she had discerned that education was the key to that broader existence which she coveted for her children, and she proposed to devote her life to securing it for them.

Her father and mother did not survive the war many years. They lived long enough to hear from their northern friends of the sad changes which had taken place during the five or six years which had passed

since they had written last; and to learn in the most chaste and explicit New England plain speech that they were regarded as "rebs" of the blackest dye, and as cut off forever from the sweet influences of family affection. Eliezer retorted in kind, and he and Rexy gave up at last a hope which they had secretly cherished to go back to their old home some time and "see the folks." In the better land to which they departed soon afterward, a land to which they might have remained strangers for years to come if they had only staid under the shadows of the salubrious blue hills of the North, instead of subjecting their ignorant Maine constitutions to the miasms of the Allowee, —in that better land, no doubt their foolish quarrels were all settled.

Cyrus succeeded to his father's farm, but the money which the old people had saved, considerably over a thousand dollars, despite the ravages of the war, fell to Direxia. She put it hungrily by for her children, though Dank thought he knew of other ways to spend it. Direxia, despite her love for him, on this one matter was adamant. Those children were going to be educated.

Cyrus had not turned out to be essentially different from the small planters around him. He drank more than was good for him, and his "shif'less" young wife, who had once been the belle of the Allowee, had faded in a few years to a dragged-out-looking woman with the clayey complexion and lustreless eyes which characterized the female portion of the Allowee folks. Her children were neglected, her house was worse even than the average of her neighbors', and Direxia hated to go to the poor cabin which her mother had kept spotlessly neat through so many years. But Cyrus did not seem to mind it.

"I've heern tell as how they's colleges fer gyurls nowadays, same as they is fer boys," Direxia told her husband one day, shortly after she learned of the amount of money which had come to her from her parents. "If they is, Voylet is goin' fer shore."

Dank had no opinion of this putting forward of women-bodies, and he said so, but Direxia was far in advance of him and, indeed, of her entire section. Voylet was going to have the best kind of an education that was to be had, and if colleges supplied that, why, to a college Voylet should go.

In the fall, as Direxia had "reckoned," Voylet went to T'rall. A boarding-place was found for her in a respectable family who had moved into town from the Allowee. Friday nights some one drove in for her and brought her home.

But one night in February, when the journey to town had been made with infinite labor through liquid miles of mud, Earl came home without Voylet. He brought a lady-like note from that highly-educated young person, saying that the roads were so "terrible" that she thought she wouldn't go home this time, especially as she had an invitation to attend a concert the next evening and was having a powerful good time.

Direxia sniffed trouble immediately. The next morning she went in person, and brought her daughter home. She learned then, what she had dimly suspected before, that Voylet's young affections were fixed upon a masculine object in the person of a journeyman plumber in T'rall. Direxia wept and pleaded, but as the weeks went on, she saw that there was no use in opposition. Voylet was wilful and spoiled: the young man seemed a "likely enough" sort of fellow, and devoted to her: Dank thought it was a heap better for "the gyurl to settle down as gyurls should, stid o' settin' out to git a heap o' larnin' they hadn't no use fer," —and in the May following the T'rall educational experiment Voylet was married, and after a trip to Memphis she "settled down" in a little home of her own.

Now Direxia concentrated all her hopes upon Earl. The boy was not stupid, and when he left the log schoolhouse, where he had had a year of instruction from the best teacher that the Allowee had ever known, it was predicted that by a year more of solid study he might be ready to enter the college in the next county, to

which Direxia's ambition had turned. The young teacher had taken the pains to tutor Earl out of school hours for a little extra pay, and had had a faculty of interesting the boy, so that he had really done well. He was accordingly sent to school in T'rall just as his sister had been, only he boarded with her, and to do her justice, she attempted to second her mother's projects. He worked through the year and came home in June, having accomplished his task.

That summer Cyrus wanted extra hands, and Earl went over to the old homestead and staid several weeks with him. He earned some money by this means, but he acquired a habit which was worse than any lack of money. Officious neighbors brought the news of it to Direxia. They thought she would not mind it much. Dank drank enough, heaven knew. But there were not so many hopes pinned to Dank as to Earl. Direxia was wild at the thought of her son's future being imperilled by a possible appetite for liquor, and she had long talks with the boy on the subject before he started for college in the fall. He made her many fair promises, but before another summer came around, he was expelled for getting into some scrape while he was not himself, and he came home to find his mother heart-broken.

The boy was sorry, but he was too shallow and too easy-going to feel his disgrace and her disappointment very long; and as Dank, who had had the "middlin' poorlys" ever since his army life, and had not lived in a way to get over them, sickened during the spring, and was not able to do a stroke of work all the season, the boy had his hands full. In the fall Dank died, and poor Direxia mourned him sincerely. The next year she and Earl managed the farm together. He did not conquer his habits, but he was fond of her, and with the overweening love of a mother, she had managed to forgive him, outwardly at least.

The year following, Earl was twenty-one. The women on the Allowee were old at forty, and though Direxia was not much more than that, she felt that her life was spent. She had cherished her poor little

ideals, but she had seen them shattered: and since Dank's death she had felt that she had little to live for.

Earl, like all of the young fellows of the neighborhood, among whom he had lost none of prestige by his escapades, spent every evening away from home, and usually in the store at the Fo' Corners. He was regarded as an oracle among his companions. His language was better and he knew more than any other young man upon the Allowee. There had been some talk about his studying law, but even his ambitious mother did not encourage him to do so. She had a blind feeling that as long as he was at home where she could look after him, he would not go quite to the dogs. She was not so sure of it, if he should try to shift for himself. Earl, though he enjoyed the distinction awarded him by his companions, seemed utterly destitute of aspiration. It had seemed to be his duty, after his father's death, to stay with his mother, and to carry on the plantation as well as he could. He had been content to rest in that place.

One night he came home soberer than usual. Direxia did not always sit up for him, but to-night she had happened to. His eyes were very bright, and he looked fairly handsome, though he had never been thought so good-looking as his sister.

"I've got some news for you, mother," he began, almost before he had opened the door.

A sudden dread smote her heart. She had picked up some of the phrases of civilization from her children, but in her excitement she reverted to the old vernacular in which she first talked and in which she thought.

"You-uns struck me all of a heap, Earl," she began tremulously, "but I low' it's good news by yer looks."

"You're right it is," he rejoined with smiling pride. "Jinny Powers is going to marry me. I've made her set the day already. I told her everything was ready here for her and I knew you were lonesome. She says the wedding may come off the first of March."

It was now the middle of January. Direxia drew a

quick breath. She could not even congratulate her boy, though the girl was well enough, and she could see that he was perfectly happy. She sat dumb.

"Speak out, mammy!" he cried, with a spice of masculine sternness in his tone. "Ain't you glad? Ain't I a lucky fellow? Half the boys on the Allowee are after Jinny,—and she's going to have *me!*"

"Hit's powerful pleasant, I 'low," stammered Direxia, "I hope you'll make her a good husband, Earl,—I'm shore I do—an' that she'll make you a good wife. I—I ain't so dreadful lonesome,—'cept long o' missin' your pappy,—an' tain't likely she's goin' to be like he was to me."

"Poor mammy!" cried the young man, too full of happiness to reproach her for not entering more fully into his joy, "You've had a hard time,—but you'll like Jinny and she'll like you, and we'll enjoy ourselves now, you'll see."

But to Direxia the thought of having this giddy young Jinny Powers come into her own home as the mistress thereof was very hard. She went to bed weeping unreasonably, and all through the next day she could not keep her thoughts on her work. Her shining kitchen! There was none like it on the Allowee. Jinny Powers would doubtless allow her mother-in-law the privilege of keeping it clean in the future as she had done in the past,—but Direxia was not sure that she should thoroughly enjoy that privilege under the changed conditions of her life.

Earl went off soon after supper the next evening, and Direxia sat down beside the lamp, and gazed into the fire through the tears which rolled silently down her cheeks from time to time. At last, from sheer weariness of her thoughts, she picked up the county paper, published at T'rall, and glanced idly over its columns. She regarded with pride the advertisement of the plumbers for whom Voylet's husband worked. Then she read a story, at the silly sentimentalism of which the hard-headed—yet, after all, fierily sentimental—old woman sniffed disdainfully. Then she turned to a col-

umn of local advertisements, and one among them caught her eye. She read it over several times. It said: "Wanted, a matron for the new orphan asylum, at once. Apply to Mrs. Judge Burnley."

"A matron!" reflected Direxia. "I don't rightly know what a matron is. I reckon it's somebody to look after the housekeepin' for them pore little things. I reckon she'd likely have to see that the house was scrubbed clean, and the young 'uns too, an' see to the cookin' an' such-like."

"That yer would likely be powerful hard work," she pursued a moment later. "Hit's a mighty big buildin', that yer orphan asylum. I seen hit when I was to T'rall many a time. I 'lowed hit was nigh about finished up. Likely they're ready to move into it. They's a heap o' orphans, I heern tell, an' now hit's got too small fer 'em in the old place,—pore little things, their pappies was killed in the war. I'd like right well to do 'em a good turn myself."

The next morning, Direxia put on her best mourning bonnet and shawl, and harnessing a mule with her own hands, started for T'rall, with the dimmest possible ideas as to what she was going to do. She went at once to the grand residence of Judge Burnley.

It was well along in the twilight when Direxia and the mule were on their homeward way. There had been old neighbors of the Driggses in T'rall, to whom Direxia had referred Mrs. Burnley. They all testified to Direxia's capabilities as a housekeeper in the Allowee meaning of the word. They told how she had run the farm when her husband had been away. They said "'Meers Dank Driggs' passed fer a powerful smart woman" up Allowee way.

Direxia was going to undertake to be matron of the great new orphan asylum, at a salary which seemed to her too munificent to be true. As she rode along, her thoughts kept time to the jogging of the old mule, something like this: "Wal, Rexy Driggs! what in time would Dank say if he was to know this yer? Likely as not he does sense it up thar,"—and Direxia turned her

face reverently toward the sky, "Like as not he's a laughin' fit to kill, same as he useter, when he was tickled hyar. Wal, he wouldn't strike out to be a lawyer nor a gineral. He was boun' fer to be a planter down in the bottom of the Allowee, an' so he was. I ain't sayin' but it was best so," with a guilty thought that she was doing her kind, weak husband an injustice,—"but I always did think that Dank Driggs could have took his place to be more 'count than ever he set up to be. Then I was powerful onhappy because Voylet up an' got married so,—before she had come to bein' sensible, 's ye might say. I wanted Voylet to be like Jedge Burnley's gals, and them as they goes with, but she ain't. She's a nice gal,—Voylet is,—an' she takes powerful good keer of her babby,—but she's a livin' along, fer all I see, not much better 'n I always was on the Allowee,—and I meant she should have something a heap better. I do' know as she was to blame. Likely she couldn't see it as I do. An' then thar's Earl. I always thought he was the likeliest boy in Allowee County. He mought have gone to Congress,—he mought have been President likely, if—if——," Direxia could not name even to herself the cause of the failure of her idol to come up to her hopes of him. She sobbed aloud as she rattled over the rough road. "But—" gathering her strength with a long sigh,—"likely he won't git much worse. Likely Jinny Powers'll change him. He's boun' to be the bigges' man on the Allowee, 'outen he gits worse. But taint what I planned fer him. An' now after all this projeckin' to git the res' to start out in the worl' an' be diffrunt,—the old woman herself has had to do it fer 'em." She laughed to herself, doubtful as she really felt in her modest soul of her capacity to do the work which she had undertaken. "She's set out to be somebody, an' she don' mean to give up till she's wore to a plumb frazzle."

Direxia felt an exaltation akin to that with which a sculptor regards the shape in the clay toward which his thought has long been tending, but which has hitherto eluded his yearning touch. To her simple soul it

was an ambition of the loftiest kind to become the matron of an orphan asylum.

For twenty years Direxia Driggs labored in the sphere to which she had been called by the chance reading of the T'rall paper that night. She became the pet of the directors of the institution, who numbered some of the leading women of the county. Her juicy idioms, her strong yet gentle character, her loving devotion to duty, made her the friend and favorite of them all. When she died in 188– the mourning for her was more like the mourning for a great hero of the war than for "only a woman,"—a plain, homely woman from the Allowee. She had instilled into the children who had been under her care her own lofty ambitions. She had lived to see some of them realize her hopes for them,—hopes which had been almost as fervent as those which she had cherished and which had ended so miserably for her own children. In the broader life which she had entered into in her new sphere of labor she had found the happiness which she had hoped for. It had been a realization such as is seldom granted to mortals.

The lawn which stretches out in front of the orphan asylum is one of the most beautiful in the south. Magnolia and tulip trees, pink judas trees, bowers covered with the vines of the multiflora rose,—all of the choicest products of that favored clime have been taught to grow there: but on a little knoll, clear and high amid this luxuriance of greenery and bloom all the shrubs and trees have been cut away, and only the velvet grass is reverently allowed to grow. The knoll is crowned by a costly statue. It was carved by one of the foremost of living sculptors, and represents a woman in cap and spectacles,—a homely, large-featured old woman,—but with a look upon her face which is an inspiration to everyone who beholds it.

On the base of the statue, cut deep into the living stone, is the name "Direxia Driggs." "This woman," the inscription goes on to say, "though her lot lay always among the humble and afflicted, ever reached

forward to the things which are before, and taught to all about her the sacred lesson that mortals should make the most of such gifts as the providence of God bestows. She rests from her labors, and her works, yea, even the praise of a mighty host of those for whom she unselfishly toiled, do follow her."

Those who know all of Direxia's pathetic story cannot behold the beautiful memorial, in its inexpressible simplicity and dignity, without tears.

Voylet and Earl come there sometimes, and bring their children to gaze upon the statue. They often say dully, "It is monstrous strange how mammy was for pushin' us all on to be somebody," and shake their heads. Their hearts ache dumbly,—even Earl's under his sodden skin—for the pangs which they know they caused her. But it was not in them to be like her. They will be Allowee Folks to the end of the chapter.

Would that every duel might end as agreeably as did that of the rival barbers! This brilliant little sketch is translated for ROMANCE by Laura Lyon White from the French of Ernest L'Epine.

A DUEL WITH RAZORS.

You are going to Toulon? Yes? Then you must see the mills of Dardennes. The omnibus leaves Saint-Pierre station every hour. On the outskirts of the village the road runs along the eastern base of the Faron. To the right and left, the route is brightened by gardens half roasted, and by houses three quarters broiled.

If I tell you all this, it is because the carry-all raises such a dust that you might not see them.

Towards the end of an hour, or thereabouts, you enter a narrow valley moistened by the torrent of Dardennes. I call your attention to the torrent, because otherwise, being nearly always dry, it might fail to catch your eye.

Arrived there, you alight. Your inclination tending that way, you visit the hospitable mansion of Madame Bougarelle, the *salle de verdure*, and the smiling abyss at the bottom of which, encased in green, sings a cascade.

If you make this excursion in spring time you will take pleasure in going across the fields to the village of Revest. Joanne, the guide, declares the Romans established a house there, for dyeing colors. Seeing the grass all sprinkled with poppies and scarlet anemones, one can believe it.

Besides, by the way of Revest, the road is more charming still, and by traversing this delightful profusion of myrtle and rose-laurel, one reaches, almost as soon, the gulf of Ragagne; a veritable gulf that, for, in times of peace, its waters are not less than two hundred feet in depth. When a storm breaks, and the rain continues, it no longer knows what it does. Exasperated, it rises—rises, white with foam—and brings to the sur-

face huge boulders of granite, wrenched from the bed of the Dardennes, which it refills with débris.

Here, astride the torrent, is seen the village of Coucouroux, a bold cavalier proudly seated. When it rains, Coucouroux has water up to the waist; when it is dry, the Coucourannais, who wash their faces—you need not laugh, for some of them do—are obliged to go to Revest to fill their pitchers.

Coucouroux is divided into two factions. The people on the upper side, to the right, are for the King and the Virgin; the people below, to the left, are for the Republic and No-Popery. Those of Old Coucouroux are fighters; those of New Coucouroux are fighters; the result may be imagined.

Each Coucouroux has its barber, who is a beautiful speaker, a player of the tambourine, singer, composer of rhymes and refrains, and an expert shaver, ready at any moment to curl an eye-lash, or, blindfolded, to cut into four pieces a pig's bristle.

Do not say in the upper village that shaving is done better in the valley, and vice versa, or you will have ugly work on your hands.

It is no longer ago than fifteen or sixteen days, at most, that Frédéri, the barber of New Coucouroux, conceived the idea of being shaved by his confrère. Frédéri was a fine-looking young man, well got up, dressed in cloth throughout, and he carried his twenty-two years as no one else could.

"What a hole!" cried he, entering the empty shop of his neighbor, and striking the counter with his open palm.

Agay, the master of the place, was making baskets in the little garden at the back of the house, and, as he was singing hymns at the top of his voice, he did not hear the call.

"Must one shoot off a cannon to make you hear, old singer of psalms?" and, walking into the house, Frédéri in his turn began to sing.

Agay ceased his religious chant, and, having arisen, seemed astonished to find his rival at the entrance of

the garden, with a smile upon his lips, and his hands in his pockets.

"What are you here for?"

"To see if you know your trade, as some people pretend you do."

"You have not the ability to judge, apprentice."

"All the same you are going to shave me."

"You are mistaken in the door; the veterinary surgeon lives a few steps further on. I do not shave animals."

"Ah! I see, you have a change of *clientele*."

"Get out of here, I tell you; do not provoke me."

"Bah! What have I to fear? Your hand trembles like that of a girl writing her first love-letter."

"I defy you, Frédéri; the hand which shakes with anger is firmer than any other in the hour of trial."

"You are nothing but a boaster, and I see I shall have to shave myself."

"You dare not trust your nose to me. You are bragging."

"One from New Coucouroux dares all things," said the young barber, seating himself in the professional chair, and holding up his chin to the enemy.

"You wish it?"

"Certainly."

"Very well! but, will you shave me afterwards?"

"Willingly! One politeness calls for another."

Agay selected, from the linen closet, a napkin exceptionally white, soft and perfumed. He tied it around the neck of his customer, all the while singing, in his own fashion, some beautiful verses from Aubanal. At length, from a case, he took the softest brush, and coolly began to lather the chin of his rival. He took up a razor.

"Listen to me well," said the barber from New Coucouroux, rising from his seat. "You understand that when one has a skin as delicate as mine, he wishes, naturally, to keep it so, but he cannot without especial care. I know at least three girls who would make but a single mouthful of you should a mark be left on me;

therefore, to avoid misapprehension, I tell you that if you scratch me, I will blow your head off."

Then Frédéri took from his pocket a little revolver, cocked it, and sat down.

"Wretch! you hope to make me tremble; you will not succeed."

"That is your affair."

The operation commenced. Agay had never had a lighter, surer hand; his soap never so much foam and perfume. Like a couple of fighting cocks, the two adversaries kept each other in sight. Their breaths crossed, they were alone, each hating the other to his utmost. The palms of their hands were burning, their finger-tips were cold as ice. Every time he approached the cheek of Frédéri, Agay said, "Wretch! with what joy I could kill you." And at the same instant, Frédéri was preparing to shoot Agay. Each waited for the other to make the attack. This lasted eight minutes and forty seconds, when the beard received its finishing stroke.

"And now it is my turn," said the barber of Old Coucouroux, putting down his razor; "shave me, and in such a manner that I cannot even suspect you of an intention to injure me, for should I suspect you, a terrible misfortune will befall you."

Without replying, Frédéri washed his neck under the faucet.

Agay seated himself. He leaned his head upon the back of the chair, holding in his hand an uncorked vial, while he smilingly looked at his adversary.

"Is it a cordial to give you a little courage?" asked the barber of New Coucouroux, tying a napkin around the neck of his rival.

"No! my son; it is vitriol, which I shall throw in your face if you cut me."

"Good! it is well to know always what to expect." And Frédéri began to work. His hand ran over the visage of his enemy with precision, rapidity, and lightness, and Agay would have doubted that Frédéri had

touched him, had he not seen in a mirror the details of the performance.

In four minutes the task was completed.

"Put down your bottle now, and thank God," said the champion of New Coucouroux, "for if I had ruffled your skin, I should have cut your throat."

"Blood of Christ," exclaimed Agay, caressing his chin, "that is what I call the work of a master—a master. Eh! man, I have in the cellar a choice wine of Roussillon, which I will gladly open in your honor. Will you empty a bottle with me?"

"Two bottles are better than one, my comrade; I will drink with you, for you have a stout heart and a sure touch. But you, in turn, must visit me, for I, also, have good wine, and at your service."

"Agreed! Your hand, friend, and for life."

Some of the misadventures and miscalculations of Sir John Falstaff are recalled by this good old English story of a clever and humorous highwayman. Its author's name has long been lost, but it first saw the light in the London *Once a Week*.

TOM ROCKET.

TOM ROCKET was a highwayman. No one ever christened him Tom, and his father's name was not Rocket. When he was tried for his life at Warwick assizes, he was arraigned as Charles Jackson, and they were particular about names then. If you indicted a man as Jim, and his true name was Joe, he got off; and when the law was altered—so that they could set such errors right at the trial—people, leastwise lawyers, said that the British constitution was being pulled up, root and branch. But that's neither here nor there. I cannot tell you how it was that he came to be known as Tom Rocket, and if I could, it would not have anything to do with my story. For six years he was the most famous thief in the Midland counties, and for six years no one knew what he was like. He was a lazy fellow, was Tom; he never came out except when there was a good prize to be picked up, and he had his scouts and his spies all over the place to give him information about booty, and warn him of danger. But to judge by what people said, he was 'on the road' at half-a-dozen different places at once every day of his life; for you see when any one was robbed of his property, or found it convenient so to account for it, why he laid it upon Tom Rocket as a sort of excuse for giving it up easily, because, you see, no one thought of resisting Tom. So it was that all sorts of conflicting descriptions of his person got abroad. One said that he was an awfully tall man and had a voice like thunder; another that he was a mild little man, with black eyes and light hair. He was a fiery fat man, with blue eyes

and black hair, with some; he had a jolly red face—he was as pale as death—his nose was Roman one day, Grecian or a snub the next. His dress was all the colors of the rainbow, and as for his horse!—that was of every shade and breed that was ever heard of, and of a good many more beside, that have yet to be found out. He wore a black half-mask, but somehow or other it was always obliging enough to slip off, so as to give each of his victims a full view of his face, only no two of them could ever agree as to what it was like.

My father was a Gloucestershire man. He stood six feet three in his stockings, and measured thirty-six inches across the chest. He could double up a half crown between his finger and thumb, and was as brave as a lion. So, many a time and oft, when any one talked of the dangers of the road, he would set his great teeth together, shake his head, and say that he should like to see the man that could rob *him* on the highway; and, finally, he *did* see him, and it was Tom Rocket.

My father was a lawyer, and was, at the time I have mentioned, engaged in a great tithe cause that was to be tried at Warwick spring assizes. So, shortly before Christmas, he had to go over to look up the evidence. There was no cross-country coach, so he rode; and being, as I have said, a brave man, he rode alone. He transacted his business; and my poor mother being ill, and not liking to leave her alone longer than he could help, he set out to ride home again about half-past nine o'clock that same evening. It was as beautiful a winter's night as ever you were out in. His nag was a first rate hunter, as docile as a dog, and fit to carry even his weight over, or past, anything. He had a brace of excellent pistols in his holsters; and he jogged along, humming a merry tune, neither thinking nor caring for any robber under the sun. All of a sudden it struck him that the pretty barmaid of an inn just out of Warwick town, where he had stopped to have a girth that he had broken patched together, had been very busy with those self-same pistols; and suspecting that

she might have been tampering with them, he drew the charges and re-loaded them carefully. This done, he jogged on again as before.

He had ridden about ten miles, when he came to a wooden bridge that there was in those days over the Avon. Just beyond it rose a stiffish hill, at the top of which was a sudden bend in the road. Just as my father reached this turn, a masked horseman suddenly wheeled round upon him, and bade him '*Stand and deliver!*' It was Tom Rocket! In a second my father's pistols were out, cocked, and snapped within a yard of the highwayman's chest; but, one after the other, they missed fire! The pretty barmaid—a special favorite of Tom's—was too sharp to rely upon the old dodge of drawing the balls, or damping the charge; she thrust a pin into each touchhole, and broke it short off.

'Any more?' Tom inquired, as coolly as you please, when my father's second pistol flashed in the pan.

'Yes!' shouted my father, in a fury, 'one for your nob!' And seizing the weapon last used by the muzzle, he hurled it with all his might and main at Rocket's head. Tom ducked, the pistol flew over the hedge, and my father, thrown out of balance by his exertion, lost his seat, and fell heavily on the grass by the roadside. In less time than it takes to say so, Tom dismounted, seized my father by the collar, and presenting a pistol within an inch of his face as he lay, bade him be quiet, or it would be the worse for him.

'You've given me a deal of trouble,' said Tom, 'so just hand over your purse without any more ado, or by G—d! I'll send a bullet through your skull—just there'; and he laid the cold muzzle of his pistol on my father's forehead just between his eyes.

It is bad enough to have to look down the barrel of loaded firearms upon full cock, with a highwayman's finger upon the trigger; but to have the cold muzzle pressed slowly upon your head—ugh!—it makes me creep to think of it.

My father made a virtue of necessity, and quietly handed over his purse.

'Much good may it do you,' he said; 'for there's only three-and-sixpence in it.'

'Now for your pocket-book,' said Tom, not heeding him.

'Pocket-book?' inquired my father, turning a little pale.

'Aye, pocket-book!' Tom repeated; 'a thick black one; it is in the left hand pocket of your riding-coat.'

'Here it is,' said my father; 'you know so much about it that perhaps you can tell what its contents are worth!'

'I'll see,' Tom replied, quietly taking out and unfolding half a dozen legal-looking documents.

'They are law papers—not worth a rush to you or any one else,' said my father.

'Then,' Tom replied, 'I may tear them up,' and he made as though he would do so.

'Hold! on your life!' my father shouted, struggling hard, but in vain, to rise.

'Oh! they *are* worth something, then,' said Tom, with a grin.

'It would take a deal of trouble to make them out again,' my father replied sulkily,—'that's all.'

'How much trouble?' Tom inquired, with a meaning look.

'Well,' my father answered, 'I suppose I know what you are driving at. Hand me them back and let me go, and I promise to send you a hundred pounds when and where you please.'

'You know very well that these papers are worth more than a hundred,' said Tom.

'A hundred and fifty, then,' said my father.

'Go on,' said Tom.

'I tell you what it is, you scoundrel,' cried my father, 'I'll stake five hundred against them if you'll loose your hold, and fight me fairly for it.'

Tom only chuckled.

'Why, what a ninny you must take me for,' he said; 'why should I bother myself fighting for what I can get without.'

'You're a cur, that's what you are,' my father shouted in a fury.

'Don't be cross,' said Tom, 'it don't become you to look red in the face. Now, attend to me,' he continued in an altered tone. 'Do you see that bridge? Well! there's a heap of stones in the center, isn't there? Very good! If you will place five hundred guineas in gold, in a bag, amongst those stones at twelve o'clock at night this day week, you shall find your pocket-book and all its contents in the same place two hours afterwards.'

'How am I to know that you will keep your word,' my father replied, a little softened by the hope of regaining, even at so heavy a price, the papers that were invaluable to him.

'I'm Tom Rocket,' replied the robber, securing the pocket-book upon his person, 'and what I mean, I say; and what I say, I stick to. Now, get up, and mind,' he added, as my father sprang to his feet, '*my* pistols don't miss fire.'

'I shall live to see you hanged,' my father muttered, adjusting his disordered dress.

'Shall I help you to catch your horse?' Tom asked politely.

'I'll never rest till I lodge you in jail,' said my father, savagely.

'Give my compliments to your wife,' said Tom, mounting his horse.

'Confound your impudence,' howled my father.

'Good night,' said Tom, with a wave of his hand, and turning sharp round, he jumped his horse over the fence and was out of sight in a moment.

It was not quite fair of my father, I must own, but he determined to set a trap for Tom Rocket, baited with the five hundred guineas, at the bridge. He posted up to London, saw Bradshaw, a famous Bow street runner, and arranged that he and his men should come down, and help to catch Tom, but just at the last moment Bradshaw was detained upon some important government trial, and so another runner, Fraser, a no less celebrated officer, took his place.

It was settled that the runners should come by different roads, and all meet at a wayside inn about five miles from the bridge, at eight o'clock p. m. on the day my father's pocket-book was to be returned. An hour afterwards they were to join him on the road three miles further on. Their object, you see, in taking this roundabout course was to baffle Tom's spies and accomplices, and to get securely hid about the appointed spot long before the appointed time.

My father was a little late at the place of meeting; but when he arrived there he could see no one about, except a loutish-looking countryman in a smock-frock, who was swinging on a gate hard by.

'Good noight, maister,' said my yokel.

'Good night to you,' said my father.

'Can ye tell me who this yer letter's for,' said the yokel, producing a folded paper.

My father saw in a moment that it was his own letter to Bradshaw.

'Where did you get that?' he said quickly.

'Ah!' replied the yokel, replacing it in his pocket, 'that ud be tellins. Be yer expecting anybody?'

'What's that to you?' said my father.

'Oh, nought,' said the yokel, 'only a gentleman from London—'

'Ha!' cried my father; 'what gentleman?'

'Will a name beginning with F. suit you?' asked the yokel.

'Fraser?' The word fell involuntarily from my father's lips.

'That's the name,' replied the yokel, jumping down from his seat, and changing his tone and manner in a moment. 'I'm Fraser, sir, and you're Mr. Sandiger, as has been robbed of a pocket-book containing waluable papers; and we're going to catch Tom Rocket as has got it—that's our game, sir. All right, sir, and now to business.'

'But where are your men?' my father asked, when Fraser had explained the reason for his disguise.

'All right again, sir,' said the runner, 'they will join

us. We have not much time to lose, so please to lead the way.'

So my father led the way, followed by Fraser; and by the time that they came in sight of the bridge, they had been joined by four London officers, in different disguises, and from different directions. One appeared as a tramp, one as a peddler, another as a gentleman's servant leading a horse, and the fourth as a soldier. No one could have guessed that they had met before, much less that they were engaged together in a pre-concerted scheme. My father gave Fraser great credit for the dexterous way in which he had collected his forces.

The bridge upon which the money was to be placed, consisted of two arches across the river, and was joined on either side by a long sort of causeway, built upon piles over meadows that in the winter time were generally covered with water. It so happened that the very next morning after the robbery heavy rain set in, and soon the floods were out, so that there was no way of getting on the bridge but by going along the causeway, which extended a distance of a hundred yards, sloping down gradually to the road, on each side of the river. This causeway was built of wood. At some places the timbers were covered with earth and stones, but at others the roadway had worn out and they were bare, so that any one looking up from underneath could see who was passing overhead. Mr. Fraser's sharp eye took in the position in a moment. He got two hurdles out of a field close by, and with some rope, that he had brought for another purpose, fastened them to the piles, so that they hung like shelves between the roadway and the flood, one at each side of the bridge, and about twenty yards from it. This was his plan: two of his men were to lie hidden on each hurdle, whilst he and my father, in a boat that was concealed beneath the main arch of the bridge, unseen themselves, could watch the heap of stones where the money was to be placed, and the stolen pocket-book left in exchange for it. As soon as Tom Rocket, or any of his

friends, removed the bag in which the gold was packed, Fraser was to whistle, and his men were to climb from their hiding places, and secure whoever it might be. If he leaped over the railing of the causeway, and took to the water, there was the boat in which to follow him.

Mr. Fraser was very particular to practice his allies in springing quickly from their place of concealment and impressing upon them and my father the necessity of all acting together, keeping careful watch and strict silence. 'And now, sir,' he said to my father as a distant clock chimed a quarter to twelve, 'it is time to get to our places and to bait the trap, so please to hand me the bag that I may mark it, and some of the coins so as to be able to identify them at the trial.'.

My father gave him the bag, saw him write upon it and make some scratches on about a dozen of the guineas, and then my father let himself down into the boat, in which he was immediately joined by the runner.

'It's all right,' said Fraser, in a low tone.

'Do you think he will come?' whispered my father.

'Certain,' replied Fraser, 'but, hush! we must not talk, sir, time's up.'

For three mortal hours did my father sit in that boat, and the runners lay stretched out on the broad of their backs upon those hurdles, watching for Tom Rocket to come for his money; and for three mortal hours not a soul approached the bridge, not a sound but the wash of the swollen river was heard. By the time that the clock struck three, my father, who had been nodding for the last twenty minutes, fell fast asleep as he sat covered up in his cloak, for it was a bitter cold night; but was very speedily aroused by hearing Fraser cry out that they were adrift.

Adrift they were, sure enough. The rope that held them had been chafed against the sharp corner of a pile (so Mr. Fraser explained) till it broke, and away went the boat, whirling round and round in the eddies of the river, fit to make any one giddy. So strong was the stream, that they were carried a mile and a half down it, before they could get ashore. My father was for

returning directly to the bridge, and so was Fraser; but, somehow or other, they lost each other in the dark; and when my father arrived there, having run nearly all the way, he found, to his great surprise, that the officers had left. He rushed to the heap of stones and there the first thing that caught his eye was his pocket-book—*the money was gone.*

Lord, how he did swear.

Determining to have it out with the runners for deserting their posts, he hurried on to the inn where they had met, and were to pass the night. He knocked at the door. No answer. He knocked again, louder. No answer. He was not in the very best of tempers, as you may guess; so he gave the door a big kick. In it flew; and a sight met his view that fairly took away his breath. Tied into five chairs, hand and foot, trussed up like so many Christmas turkeys, with five gags in their five mouths, and their five pairs of eyes glaring at him owlishly, sat the *real* Mr. Fraser and his four Bow street runners. Tom Rocket had managed the business at the bridge himself! How he managed to get scent of the plot, and to seize the officers altogether, just at the nick of time, my father never could find out, and no one knows to this day.

Upon examining his pocket-book, my father found all his documents, and a paper on which was written these words:

"By destroying these writings I could have ruined you. In doing so I should have injured your client, whom I respect. For his sake I keep my word, though you have played me false. TOM ROCKET."

Here Mr. Josh paused, and smoked for some time in silence.

'And what became of Tom?' asked one of the company.

'Well,' replied Mr. Josh, 'after having been tried three times, and getting off upon some law quibble on each occasion, he—who had robbed the worth of thousands of pounds, and escaped—was executed at Nottingham for stealing an old bridle!'

It might not have been exactly lawful that the widow should have gone free in the following story, which appeared in the Detroit *News*, but every reader will be glad that its scene is laid far enough away from the Atlantic seaboard to insure her safety.

THE REVERSED VERDICT.

Jem Blake was shot dead in his own doorway by Antonio Gueldo, and the trial was to come off directly.

The extraordinary interest in the affair was less due to the murder and its peculiar circumstances than to the fact that this was the first case tried at San Saba in any more formal court than the time honored institution of Judge Lynch.

As there was no place specially arranged for the trial, Judge Pitblado hospitably offered the use of his shed. Here a rough table and chair were placed for the judge, the other necessary furniture, intended to represent the dock, the stand, etc., being eked out with boxes from Silas Bagget's grocery store.

Jake Smith looked at these preparations for a time with frowning discontent and then strolled down the road, turning into the lane that led to Blake's. When he reached the door of the shanty he leaned against the jamb and poked his naked head inside, fanning himself in an embarrassed way with his greasy fragment of a hat. He had come there with the intention of saying something, but the sight within made him forget it.

Blake's widow sat there, as she had pretty much all the time since the murder, staring straight before her, with her chin in her palm. The sunlight struck through the foliage of the red oak trees that grew before the door, and checkered with the flickering brightness the floor and the cradle in which Jem's baby was sleeping.

There it was, just as it had been three days ago (could it be only three days?)—just as it had been when

she went out that morning to look after the drying clothes and left him standing in the door by the cradle (how fond he was of the baby!)—just as it was when she heard the crack of the pistol and ran in with an awful sense of suffocating fright—just the same as when she had found him lying upon the cradle, dabbling its white linen with his blood and the baby playing with his hair. She screamed once, the first and last complaint any one had heard her make; then she was quiet and helpful through it all—when men came and lifted him up; when they had laid him on the rough bed in the other room; when they carried him to the grave, she following with the baby in her arms.

Jake Smith was trying to find the link missing in his thoughts; he sniffed with perplexity—or something—and Blake's widow looked up without speaking. Jake nodded pleasantly four or five times.

"Pooty chipper?" asked he.

Blake's widow smiled sadly, bent over the sleeping child and smoothed the clothes with a tender touch.

"They're agoin ter try him in a court," Jake went on, "an I don't believe"——

"Try who—Antonio?" She turned toward the burly figure in the door with a flash of interest in her black eyes.

"Yes. The jedge is making a court out of his shed. I hope it'll turn out all right, but it seems like givin that Mexican devil a chance he oughtn't ter have."

"He can't get clear, can he?" she asked, rocking the cradle gently and patting the coverlet.

"I don't see how, but he's got some kind of a law cuss to speak for him—a feller that stopped here a day or two ago on his way to Galveston—and it makes me kind o' nervous."

Blake's widow did not appear to notice the last remark, for the child, disturbed by the talking, had awakened and sat up in his cradle with a wondering look.

"Pooty, ain't he?" said Jake, regarding the small figure with interest. "Looks just like—ahem—you.

Poor little—l—a"—he stammered, and treated his hat like a mortal enemy. "Of course he'd had—you've got—there's nothin I could do fur yer, maybe?"

She answered with a grateful look, but it was accompanied by a shake of the head.

Jake bent down and with his big forefinger softly rumpled the hair of the baby's head; then he went out and left them, Blake's widow sitting as he found her and the baby staring down the path after him.

He walked on until he reached the top of the little hill, where he could look down upon the roof which covered the piteous scene he had just left. Here he seemed to have half a mind to turn back, for he hesitated and stopped; but he changed his partial intention after lingering a moment and walked meditatively onward, with the exclamation, "Wal, some women do beat the d—l amazin."

Of course everybody came to the trial. The arrangements were soon found to be altogether too meager. Pitblado's shed was filled to overflowing and Bagget made a clean sweep of every empty box in his store.

Antonio's lawyer, a sharp-eyed, sharp-featured fellow from Galveston, had bustled about with surprising agility on the day previous, holding mysterious conferences with ill-conditioned fellows of Gueldo's kidney.

The court was assembled, the jury had been chosen, and the witnesses were all present save one—Blake's widow.

Pretty soon there was a stir at the door, then a murmur of surprise ran through the crowded room.

"May I be d—d," said Jake Smith, audibly, "if she hasn't brought her bob!"

What reason she may have had for not leaving the little thing in charge of some sympathizing woman—and there were plenty who would have been glad of the trust—was not apparent; however that might be, there it was, clasped firmly in her arms, its bright red cheeks contrasting with her whiteness, and its father's sunny hair mingling with her dark locks.

With some difficulty way was made through the

throng to her seat, which had been placed on one side of the judge, directly opposite the candle box, on the other, where Antonio sat. She took her place and never moved during the whole of the trial, excepting as she was required to testify, and once when the baby tugged at some glistening thing that lay hidden in the folds of her dress, at which she took pains to distract its attention with a chip from the floor. As for the baby, it sat there with its big blue eyes open to their fullest extent, entirely absorbed in the novel scene, save at the moment when that irresistible glitter caught its eye.

Every one being now present, the trial went on in good earnest. A number of witnesses were examined, whose testimony showed that Gueldo had had trouble with Blake, and more than once threatened his life; that Gueldo's pistol was one charge empty on the evening of the day of the murder, whereas in the morning it had been full; that he was seen that morning around Blake's house, and more than that, Blake's widow had heard Gueldo's voice just before the fatal shot, and had seen him retreating as she ran out.

At this last point the Galveston lawyer asked the witness a few questions regarding how she knew it was Gueldo's, and how she had recognized the voice for his. She didn't know how exactly, but was none the less sure for that.

There had been a rumor about that some one had heard Antonio make a boast of "having done for Blake this time," but if there were a witness for this, he could not be found now.

And so the prosecution closed.

The Galveston lawyer began by involving in a whirlpool of helpless contradiction the witness who had sworn to having seen Gueldo near Blake's house. Then he expatiated on the ease with which one person may be mistaken for another, and brought a witness to show how Gueldo had already been said to resemble some one in the village. Finally he produced three of the ill-conditioned fellows before referred to, who swore

that Antonio was with them on a hunting expedition during the whole of the day on which the murder was committed.

It was a clear case of alibi. Jack Smith's astonishment at the ease with which the thing had been accomplished was unbounded. He threw a disgusted look toward Pitblado, but the judge was nonplussed and didn't seem to be interested with things in Jake's vicinity.

"Gentlemen of the jury," said he, "the trial took a turn I didn't altogether expec'. I don't know as there's much to be said. I s'pose you've got to go by the evidence, an that don't need any explainin. Ef you kin make out, accordin ter that, that Antonio Gueldo killed Jem Blake, why, jest recollect that's what yer here fur."

Jake Smith fidgeted about on his box and cast anxious glances through the open door toward the clump of nopals where the jury was deliberating.

Antonio talked and laughed in an undertone with his counsel, and Blake's widow sat staring at them with compressed lips and a strong expression of determination coming into her face.

It wasn't long before the jury filed in again, all seating themselves but the spokesman, and Judge Pitblado rose, wiping his forehead with his shirt sleeves.

"Straightened it out, have ye?" asked he, nodding to the spokesman.

The man nodded in return.

"Yer see," said the spokesman, with a hesitating and disappointed air, "ef yer hadn't a-corralled us with sticking ter the evidence, we might 'a' done better, but accordin to that Antonio wasn't thar when the murder was done, an ef he wasn't thar he couldn't 'a' done it, an ef he didn't do it, why—then—of course he's—not guilty."

Pitblado didn't dare to look at anybody; he stared up at the rafters, down at the table, nowhere in particular, and then turned half way toward the prisoner.

"You kin go," said he at last, and with great deliberation, "but don't stay around here too long."

There was a dead pause, during which nobody moved.

Jake Smith exploded a single cuss word which he had held in for some time past, and Blake's widow stood up.

"Have you got through, judge," she asked.

"Waal—I—s'pose so."

"And there is nothing else to be done?"

"I am afraid there ain't."

"And he's free to go?"

"Y-a-s."

Antonio Gueldo arose with an insolent grin and picked up his hat.

The baby crowed, for it saw the glittering thing again.

There was a sharp report—Antonio pitched forward in a heap upon the floor and Blake's widow stood with the pistol pressed to her breast.

A line of thin blue smoke curled from the muzzle of the weapon and formed a halo around the child's flaxen head. The glittering thing was quite near the little hands now, and they took it from the yielding grasp of the mother.

Blake's widow looked steadily at the figure on the floor—it was quite motionless; then she turned and went through the wide passage opened for her by the silent crowd, holding the baby very tenderly, and the baby carrying the pistol.

The child laughed with delight; it had got its shining plaything again.

It is pleasant in a world where we are constantly warned, both by reading and by living, that a fair exterior often hides ashes of Sodom beneath, to find that some men are a great deal better than they look. Such a man was the guide in the following story, which was translated by Antonio Meli from the Italian of G. Giacosa, for the Boston *Transcript*.

A STRANGE GUIDE.

I ONCE had as a guide a strange, unquiet and talkative man, so dissimilar from all others of his condition that, the first half of the way, I was seeking within myself some plausible pretext for turning back, and the second half I was blaming myself for having thought ill of him.

The manner in which he presented himself to me, his behavior, his look, his dress, his step, his accent, and even his Herculean strength, everything in him was a reason for grave suspicion.

I was at an inn in Val Tournanche, and I wished to go to Fiery, where several friends were to meet me; but, having a rather heavy valise, I needed a mule to carry it, and also a guide to show the way.

But not a single mule was to be had, and the only guide I could find, a Swiss, did not wish to carry any burden; so I was in danger of missing my appointment.

The day before I was to depart, as I was standing, about dusk, at the door of the inn, looking anxiously to see whether any guides or porters had returned from the mountains, the landlord came to tell me that he had found my man.

"Have you sent for him?"

"He is here."

"When did he come?"

"Just now."

"Does he come from the valley?"

"No, sir, from the mountain."

"Impossible. I should have seen him coming. I have been watching for an hour."

"This man does not follow the same path as the others."

"Why?"

But my host would not explain himself further; he only called with a loud voice—"Jacques!"

He was a fine man, very tall, muscular, about thirty years old, covered with sweat, the wrinkles of his face giving an expression of hard and energetic will.

He had a large, straight nose, large mouth, a forest of black curly hair, a beard two days old.

I wanted him to come in, in order to get away from the chilly breeze; but he shrugged his shoulders and said to me quickly:

"Do you wish to go to Fiery, and go up first Mount Cervino?"

"I have given up Mount Cervino, unless this evening I find a muleteer who will carry my valise."

"I will carry it."

"Then I should need a guide for Mount Cervino."

"I will come."

"Would you be willing to carry my valise up there?"

"How much does it weigh?"

"About fifty pounds."

"All right; give me fifteen francs."

The price was more than moderate, but the fellow seemed to me a swaggerer.

I offered to show him the valise; but he laughed at the idea. I did not like him.

"Are you a regular guide?"

"Certainly."

"Have you a license?"

"No. I have a certificate of honorable discharge. I was in the artillery."

"What is your name?"

"Do you want to know all this for fifteen francs?" and he began to laugh sarcastically. "Very well, I will tell you my name gratis. My name is Giacomo Balmes. Does that please you?"

Seeing that his smile did not please me, he immediately changed his expression and added emphatically—

"Fifteen francs would help me, you know; tomorrow night you will be able to tell me if I have earned them" —and after a searching glance—"The landlord tells me that you have known him quite a while. Ask him about me. My respects."

And so saying he went into the kitchen.

Next day we set out at three o'clock in the morning. My valise stuffed full seemed to him a mere straw. He carried it bound on his back with cords, like a knapsack. He walked nimbly, whistling a quickstep. His gait had something peculiar about it. I did not know what it was, but later on I understood. His step made no sound, he seemed to glide along.

Hardly had we started when he began to talk to me, but either from sleepiness or from the feeling of uneasiness which his company gave me I did not answer him.

He tried two or three subjects, then gave up and began to whistle, hastening his step. Instead of going by the regular way, he begun presently to follow round the mountain on its lower slope, until he found a kind of path cut in the living rock, rough and bare as a slate. He entered it without saying anything, and climbed like a squirrel.

Certainly by that way the ascent was pleasanter and quicker.

When we help ourselves with hands and knees, and every step must be studied and measured, the mind does not notice the fatigue.

At first, in the steepest places, Jacques turned round and offered me his hand, but, being fresh, I refused his aid, proud to encounter the rough mountain. Then the fellow began to walk by himself, abandoning me to my fate. There was no real danger, but I felt somewhat indignant at seeing him so high on the rocks. Sometimes, intent on my steps, I forgot him, and when I raised my head, annoyed at being alone, the guide was out of sight. Where had he gone? His appear-

ance, the choice of that unusual road, his gait, his mysterious disappearance, made me suspicious.

I was sure that my host would not have trusted me to a bad character, but this idea was not enough to calm me.

I continued to ascend, and when I raised my head again, there he was, but at a long distance, and still careless of me.

At first I had thought that in certain parts the path would become impracticable, and that it would be necessary to get out of it and resume it further on; but gradually as I proceeded, I perceived that the passage continued, and indeed it was always becoming more practicable. I cried to him to stop, but my voice did not reach him. If it had not been for my valise, I would have returned immediately.

At last I saw him sitting on the ground waiting for me. I came up to him in bad humor.

The smooth surface of the rock had become slippery in consequence of a stream of water, and he had stopped to offer me his hand.

"Why do you walk at such a distance from me? I wish to have you near me."

"I thought you wished to be alone; I did not want to disturb you."

"Why do you leave the path so often? What makes you go out of your way so?"

"I am of the race of hounds; I like to go smelling about the ground."

"Well, now, don't leave me any more."

"As you please."

I tried to start a conversation, but this time it was he that would not bite.

The sun had risen; he had taken off his jacket and was carrying it on his arm. From his leather belt hung a vine-dresser's hatchet, an instrument not usually worn by guides.

"Why do you carry that hatchet?"

"I always carry it."

"What for?"

"Oh, because——"

He looked at me fixedly and added—

"I have also a pistol—look!"

He took out from his pocket a short, double-barrelled pistol and gave it to me, warning me that it was loaded.

I was tempted to keep it.

In the Alps no one goes about armed; pistols are implements of luxury, intended to be fired on joyful occasions such as marriages.

But I thought that if he had intended to make bad use of it, he would not have shown it to me. I returned it to him without speaking.

After walking a quarter of an hour he said:

"Excuse me. I will return immediately. You go on. I will rejoin you in two minutes."

And down the side of the mountain he went. Hardly had he left the path when I followed him. I saw him run to a heap of great rocks about ten yards off. He bent down, moved two or three great stones, searching on the ground and then turned round. When he saw that I stood watching him, he frowned, his eyes glittered, but he smoothed his forehead in a moment.

"I want to get this piece of bread and cheese that I hid here yesterday. I often go round the mountain and place food here and there."

He looked in my eyes and said:

"Don't you believe it?"

"No." I did not believe it. I had seen him take his bread out of his pocket, and his confusion at being surprised must have had a reason. I began to feel greatly disquieted. He perceived it and immediately became jovial and talkative. He knew me, he said; he asked the landlord about me; he knew that I was a writer, a journalist in fact; it must be a fine trade for making money by the bagful. He knew city life and always read the papers. He knew also that I had written operas for the theatre, another gold mine.

If I had been willing to pay attention to him he would have told me stories about rogues.

"Ah, you gentlemen come here just for the fun of

knowing what fatigue is! If you only knew what it was and how much a piece of bread costs! And there are people that would like to steal it from us! They have here judges, jury, sheriffs and detectives, all the bad things of the earth, and if they wish to come, let them come, they will find me!"

Then he touched the pistol in his pocket. He was eloquent and excitable, like a man believing himself to be followed up by a constant persecution. He spoke by jerks, and jumped from one subject to another, as if forced by a tumultuous current of ideas, and afraid of losing them by talking. He certainly had some bitter enemy that mysteriously influenced all the acts of his life. All his talk had reference to him; he burst forth in vague threats, uttered laughing with set teeth; teeth white and firm, capable of breaking a crown piece. Nevertheless, in the depths of his eyes appeared a timid and humble uneasiness contrasting with his violent words, which finally reassured me completely. He understood this, also, and when I offered him a cigar said—

"You have thought evil of me. I am not a rogue. Come here and you will understand everything." We had lately had our first snow storm, the path had broadened and not a blade of grass was to be seen.

The whole mountain was a mass of gigantic rocks, half buried in the sand, soft and moist from the recently melted snow and the draining of the ice.

He led me by the hand in the labyrinth until we arrived at a kind of grotto formed by two rocks lying against each other.

He entered on hands and knees, and came out with a package of a few pounds weight wrapped in rags. He unbound it, and took out cigars and tobacco. He was a smuggler.

Coming from Switzerland he scattered his merchandise in many hiding-places, in order that it might not all fall into the hands of the officers.

When he had done up the package, he replaced it again in the cavity, and turned to me with a trustful

face. Now that he had himself told me his secret, he no longer feared me.

"This is the safest storehouse," said he. "The custom-house officers never come up as far as here. They know that at such a height there are no shepherds to act as witnesses. Here I am master, and this is my aide-de-camp," he added, taking out from a crevice near by a custom-house officer's musket.

A peasant cannot understand that smuggling is a guilty action; his moral sense does not comprehend the notion of the artificial rights of the State. He knows that robbing and assaulting one's neighbor are dishonorable actions, but he does not believe it to be dishonorable to buy an object where he can get it cheapest, and to sell it where he can get the most for it.

To prohibit a traffic so natural seems to him an intolerable imposition, against which it is not only lawful but meritorious to rebel. Hence a violent hatred against the custom-house officers, and the firm intention to shoot them in cold blood if necessary.

The officers know this, and often when they meet a smuggler in a rough and desert place, if they are not numerous enough to overpower him, and if they do not think the merchandise has a special value, they pretend not to see him and pass on looking the other way.

It is easy to shoot, and at those heights a body may easily be carried a long distance without detection. The officer does not return, suspicions fall on the true murderer, patrols start out searching for the dead man through the defiles of the mountains, but no one obtains sure proofs.

My guide had once found himself unarmed within range of two officers, and he had escaped by a miracle. At another time, unseen, he had rolled down from the cliff a quantity of stones on the heads of two officers who were climbing up the slope, and one of them, while endeavoring to escape, lost his musket.

"That was the musket I showed you," added Jacques with a triumphant air. "But what a horrible life! and the profit is little, you know."

He related to me his nocturnal trips in winter, alone, over the deadly glaciers, loaded like a mule. Fogs beset him and kept him motionless in a corner under a rocky cave, afraid of succumbing to the treacherous sleep of the mountain—the icy sleep, the invincible precursor of death. He knew those passages, step for step, he had counted all the rocks, he had travelled round all the windings, measured the entrances of all the crevices and tried the snowy crust that bridges the passages. He knew where to fasten the rope to let himself down along the rocks and where the rocky projections would support the foot, and where the mountain, broken by the lightning and undermined by the water, yields to the least weight and precipitates the traveller to certain death.

No guide could compete with him. He measured leaps and executed them with the sure eye and foot of the chamois.

"And do you know why I wished to accompany you? If you had not wanted me, I would have come up here by myself today. Oh, don't be afraid, I shall not smuggle in your company. I shall not put you to any risk. But one of my relations, who is engaged like me in this business, has been missing for eight days. I left him at the Zermat eight days ago, and he ought to have returned the next day. It was only yesterday evening that I learned that he had not returned. That makes me uneasy. It has snowed twice within a few days on the summits, and in summer to snow is to storm. I must hunt for him, but I am poor and I have a large family. I can't lose my time. Let us search for him together; will you, sir?"

I can not express what suppliant sweetness was in those words, "Will you, sir?" Certainly I was willing, even if it were necessary to spend two days. I could ascend Mount Cervino another time, for it was useless to search on the summits. On a glacier we found some footsteps.

"They are his," said Jacques; "they are footsteps five or six days old, and of one man only; they answer;

I hoped that he had remained at Zermat; if he has gone up, he is dead."

We followed the steps for an hour or more, but when we arrived at a higher plain, every trace disappeared. It had recently snowed, and the snow was undisturbed and level.

After we had wandered about without success, all over the glacier, towards evening we were exhausted.

We arrived at the Inn of Fiery about eleven o'clock in the evening. The house was all dark and silent. The landlord must have been a light sleeper, for hardly had my guide called him by name than he appeared in window and said—

"It is you, Jacques?"

"Yes, open."

The landlord, without moving, replied—

"He is there, behind the house, in the barn. I will come down directly."

Jacques reached the place indicated in one jump, and I followed him, groping.

Before the landlord arrived, I had lit a candle and we saw lying on the floor a sack tied up at the top, apparently enclosing the body of a man. Jacques understood: I perceived it by the gesture that he made. Just then the landlord arrived.

"They brought him this evening," he said. "The guides of Gressoney found him yesterday on the glacier; today they went up with the shepherds to get him; tomorrow the coroner will come. He was seated on the snow frozen to death; the thick fog had stopped him, he sat down and fell asleep."

Jacques opened the sack, pulled it back until he uncovered the head of the dead man, kissed him, made with his thumb the sign of the cross on his forehead, then closed the sack again, and said to the landlord—

"Give us some supper; this gentleman is dying with hunger."

It is hard to say whether young men or young women will be most interested in this clever story, which was written by E. W. Hornung for the *Strand Magazine*. The stigma of flirt has somehow attached itself to the name of woman; but it may be doubted whether, like several similar epithets, it belongs to her any more than to her brother man. Miss Anstruther happened to be the flirt in this case; but very likely Lord Nunthorp might have had a similar story told of him. One feels that Teddy Miller could not have been a flirt.

THE NOTORIOUS MISS ANSTRUTHER.

It is prejudicial to the nicest girl in this unjust world to be asked in marriage too frequently. Things come out, and she gets the name of being a heartless flirt; her own sex add, that she cannot be a very nice girl. A flirt she is, of a surety, but why heartless, and why not a nice girl? So grave defects do not follow. The flirt who doesn't think she is one—the flirt with a set of sham principles and ideals, and a misleading veneer of soul—is heartless, if you like, and something worse. Now the girl who gets herself proposed to regularly once a week in the season is far less contemptible; she is not contemptible at all, for how could she know that you meant so much more than she did? She only knows a little too much to take your word for this.

A sweetly pretty and highly accomplished young girl, little Miss Anstruther came to know too much to dream of taking any man's word on this point. She was reputed to have refused more offers than a good girl ought to get; for what in the very beginning conferred a certain distinction upon her, made her notorious at a regrettably early stage of her career. The finger of feminine disapproval pointed at her, presently, in an unmistakable way; and this is said—by women—to be a very bad sign. Men may not think so. Intensely particular ladies, in the pride of their complete respectability, tried to impress upon very

young men in whom they were interested that Miss Anstruther was not at all a nice girl. But this had a disappointing effect upon the boys. And Miss Anstruther by no means confined herself to rejecting mere boys.

The moths that singed themselves at this flame were of every variety. They would have made a rare collection under glass, with pins through them; Miss Anstruther herself would have inspected them thus with the liveliest interest. Her detractors also could have enjoyed themselves at such an exhibition. But the more generous spirts among them—those who had been young and attractive too long ago to pretend to be either still—might have found there some slight excuse for Miss Anstruther. Of course, it was no excuse at all, but it was notable that almost every moth had some salient good point—something to "account for it" on *her* side, to some extent—say a twentieth part of the extent to which she had gone. Nearly all the moths had *something* to be said for them—looks, intellect, a nice voice, an operatic moustache, or an aptitude for the informal recitation of engaging verses; their strong points, sorted out and fitted together, would have made a dazzling being—whom Miss Anstruther would have rejected as firmly and as finally as she has rejected his integral parts.

For there was no pleasing the girl. Apparently she did not mean to be pleased in that way. She had neither wishes nor intentions, it became evident, beyond immediate flirtation of the most wilful description. Her depravity was shocking.

Her accomplishment was singing. She sang divinely. Also she had plenty of money; but the money alone was not at the bottom of many declarations; her voice was the more infatuating element of the two; and her "way" did more damage than either. She was not, indeed aware what a "way" she had with her. It was a way of seeming desperately smitten, and a little unhappy about it; which is quite sufficient to make a man of tender years or acute conscientiousness "speak" on the spot. Thus many a proposal was as unexpected

on her part as it was unpremeditated on his. He made a sudden fool of himself—heard some surprisingly sensible things from her frivolous lips—decided, upon reflection and inquiry, that these were her formula—and got over the whole thing in the most masterly fashion. This is where Miss Anstruther was so much more wholesome than the flirt who doesn't think she flirts: Miss Anstruther never rankled.

She had no mother to check her notorious propensity in its infancy, and no brother to bully her out of it in the end. Her father, an Honorable, but a man of intrinsic distinction as well, was queer enough to see no fault in her; but he was a busy man. She had, however a kinsman, Lord Nunthorp, who used to talk to her like a brother on the subject of her behavior, only a little less heavily than brothers do. Nunthorp knew what he was talking about. He had once played at being in love with her himself. But that was in the days when his moustache looked as though he had forgotten to wash it off, and before Miss Anstruther came out. There had been no nonsense between them for years. They were the best and most intimate of friends.

"Another!" he would say, gazing gravely upon her as the most fascinating curiosity in the world, when she happened to be telling him about the very latest. "Let's see—*how* many's that?"

There came a day when she told Nunthorp she had lost count; and she really had. The day was at the fag-end of one season; he had been lunching at the Anstruthers', and Miss Anstruther had been singing to him.

"I'm afraid I can't assist you," said he, with amused concern. "I only remember the first eleven, so to speak. First man in was your rector's son in the country, young Miller, who was sent out to Australia on the spot. He was the first, wasn't he? Yes, I thought that was the order; and by Jove, Midge, how fond you were of that boy!"

"I was," said Miss Anstruther, glancing out of the window with a wistful look in her pretty eyes; but her

kinsman said to himself that he remembered that wistful look—it went cheap.

"The next man in," said Nunthorp, who was an immense cricketer, "was *me!*"

"I like that!" said Miss Anstruther, taking her eyes from the window with rather a jerk, and smiling brightly. "You've left out Cousin Dick!"

"So I have; I beg Dick's pardon. It was very egotistical of me, but pardonable, for of course Dick never stood so high in the serene favor as I did. I came after Dick then, first wicket down, and since then—well, you say yourself that you've lost tally, but you must have bowled out a pretty numerous team by this time. My dear Midge," said Nunthorp, with a sudden access of paternal gravity, "don't you think it about time that somebody came in and carried his bat?"

"Don't talk nonsense!" said Miss Anstruther, briskly. She added, almost miserably: "I wish to goodness they wouldn't ask me! If only they wouldn't propose, I should be all right. Why do they want to go and propose? It spoils everything."

Her tone and look were quite injured. She was more indignant than Nunthorp had ever seen her—except once—for the girl was of a most serene disposition. He looked at her kindly, and as admiringly as ever, though rather with the eye of a connoisseur; and he found she had still the most lovely, imperfect, uncommon, and fragrant little face he had ever seen in his life. He said candidly:

"I really don't blame them, and I don't see how you can. If you are to blame anybody, I'm afraid it must be yourself. You must give them some encouragement, Midge, or I don't think they'd all come to the point as they do. I never saw such sportsmen as they are! They walk in and walk out again one after the other, and they seem to like it——"

"I wish they did!" said Miss Anstruther, devoutly. "I only wish they'd show *me* that they liked it; I should have a better time then. They wouldn't keep making me miserable with their idiotic farewell letters. That's

what they *all* do. Either they write and call me everything—rudely, politely, sarcastically, all ways—or they say their hearts are broken, and they haven't the faintest intention of getting over it—in fact, they wouldn't get over it if they could. That's enough to make any person feel low, even if you know from experience what to expect. At one time I daren't look in the paper for fear of seeing their suicides; but I've only seen their weddings. They all seem to get over it pretty easily; and that doesn't make you think much better of yourself, you know. Of course I'm inconsistent!"

"Of course you are," said Nunthorp, cordially. "I approve of you for it. I'd rather see you an old maid, Midge, than going through life in a groove. Consistency's a narrow groove for narrow minds! I can do better than this about consistency, Midge; I'm hot and strong on the subject. But you're not listening."

"Ah!" cried Miss Anstruther, who had not listened to a word, "they're driving me crazy, between them! There's Mr. Willimott, you know, who writes. Of course he had no business to speak to me. There were a hundred things against him at the time—even if I'd cared for him—though he's getting more successful now. Well, I do believe he's put me into every story he's written since it happened! I crop up in some magazine or other every month!"

"'Into work the poet kneads them,'" murmured Nunthorp, who was not a professional cricketer. "Well, you needn't bother yourself about *him*. You've made the fellow. He now draws a heroine better than most men. It's a pity you don't take to writing, Midge, you'd draw your heroes better than women do as a rule; for don't you see that you must know more about us than we know about ourselves?"

"They wouldn't be much of heroes!" laughed the girl. "But I heartily wish I *did* write. Wouldn't I show up some people, that's all! It would give me something to do, too; it would keep me out of mischief, and really I'm sick of men and their ridiculous nonsense. And they all say the same thing. If only they

wouldn't say anything at all! Why do they? You might tell me!"

Nunthorp put on his thinking-cap. "You see, you are quite pretty," said he.

"Thanks."

"Then you sing like an angel."

"Please don't! That's what *they* all say."

"Ah, the singing has a lot to do with it; you oughtn't to sing so well; you should cultivate less expression. And then—I'm afraid you like attention."

"Well perhaps I do."

"And I'm sure it must be very hard not to be attentive to you," said Nunthorp, with a rather brutal impersonality; "for I should fancy you have a way—quite unconscious, mind—of giving your current admirer the idea that he's the only one who ever held the office.

"Thanks," said she, with perfect good humor; "that is a very pretty way of putting it."

"What, Midge?"

"That I'm a hopeless flirt—which is the root of the whole matter, I suppose!"

She burst out laughing and he joined her. But there had been a pinch of pathos in her words, and he was weak enough to make a show of contradicting them. She would not listen to him, she laughed at his insincerity. The conversation had been broken down, and, as soon as he decently could, he went.

That was at the very end of a season; and Lord Nunthorp did not see his notorious relative again for some months. In the following February, however, he heard her sing at some evening party; he had no chance of talking with her properly; but he was glad to learn that he could find her at a dance the next night.

"Well, Midge," he was able to say at last, as they sat out together at this dance. "How many proposals since the summer?" She gravely held up three fingers. Nunthorp laughed consumedly.

"Any more scalps?" he inquired.

This was an ancient pleasantry. It referred to the

expensive presents with which some young men had paved their way to disappointment. It was a moot point between Miss Anstruther and her noble kinsman whether she had any right to retain these things. She considered she had every right, and declared that these presents were her only compensation for so many unpleasantnesses. He pretended to take higher ground in the matter. But it amused him a good deal to ask about her "scalps." She told him about the new ones.

"And I perceive *mine*—upon your wrist!" Nunthorp exclaimed, examining her bracelet; and he was genuinely tickled.

"Well!" said she, turning to him with the frankest eyes, "I'd quite forgotten *whose* it was—honestly I had!"

He was vastly amused. So his bracelet—she had absolutely forgotten that it was his—did not make her feel at all awkward. There was a healthy cynicism in the existing relations between these two.

She had nothing very new to tell him. Two out of the last three had proposed by letter. She confessed to being sick and tired of answering this kind of letter.

"I'll tell you what," said her kinsman, looking inspired, "you ought to have one printed! You could compose a very pretty one, with blanks for the name and date. It would save you a deal of time and trouble. You would have it printed in brown ink and rummy old type, don't you know, on rough paper with coarse edges. It would look charming. 'Dear Mr. Blank, of course I' m greatly flattered'—no, you'd say 'very'—'of course I'm very flattered by your letter, but I must confess it astonished me. I thought we were to be such *friends.*' Really, Midge, it would be worth your while!"

Miss Anstruther did not dislike the joke, from him; but when he added, "The pity is you didn't start it in the very beginning, with young Ted Miller"—she checked him instantly.

"Now don't you speak about *him*," she said, in a firm, quiet little way; but he appreciated the look that swept into her soft eyes no better than he had appreciated it six months before.

"Why not?" asked Nunthorp, merely amused.

"Because *he meant* it!"

Nunthorp wondered, but not seriously, whether that young fellow, who had gone in first, was to be the one, after all, to carry out his bat. And this way of putting it, in his own head, which was half full of cricket, carried him back to their last chat, and reminded him of a thing he had wanted to say to her for the last twenty-four hours.

"Do you remember my telling you," said he, "when I last had the privilege of lecturing you, that you sang iniquitously well? Then I feel it a duty to tell you that your singing is now worse than ever—in this respect. No wonder you have had three fresh troubles; I consider it very little, with your style of singing. Your songs have much to answer for; I said so then, I can swear to it now. Your voice is heavenly, of course; but why pronounce your words so distinctly? I'm sure it isn't at all fashionable. And why strive to make sense of your sounds? I really don't think it's good form to do so. And it's distinctly dangerous. It didn't happen to matter last night, because the rooms were so crowded; but if you sing to one or two as you sing to one or two hundred, I don't wonder at them, I really don't. You sing as if you meant every word of the drivel—I believe you humbug yourself into *half* meaning it, while you're singing!"

"I believe I do," Miss Anstruther replied, with characteristic candor. "You've no idea how much better it makes you sing, to put a little heart into it. But I never thought of this: perhaps I had better give up singing!"

"I'll tell you, when my turn comes round again," said he, leading her back to the ball-room. "I'll think of nothing else meanwhile."

He did not dance; he was not a dancing man; but he did think of something else meanwhile. He thought of a young fellow with a pale face, darkly accoutred, with whom Miss Anstruther seemed to be dancing a great deal. Lord Nunthorp hated dancing, and he had

only come here to sit out a couple of dances with his amusing relative. He had to wait a good time between them; he spent it in watching her; and *she* spent it in dancing with the pale, dark boy—all but one waltz, during which Nunthorp removed his attention from the bow to its latest string, who, for the time being, looked miserable.

"Who," he asked her, as they managed to get possession of their former corner in the conservatory, "is your dark-haired, pale-faced friend?"

"Well," whispered Miss Anstruther, with grave concern, "I'm very much afraid that he is what *you* would call the next man in!"

"Good heaven!" ejaculated Nunthorp, for once aghast. "Do you mean to say he is going to propose to you?"

"I feel it coming; I know the symptoms only too well," she replied, in cold blood.

"Then perhaps you're going to make a different answer at last?"

"My *dear* man!" said Lord Nunthorp's sisterly little connection; and her tone was that of a person rather cruelly misjudged.

The noble kinsman held his tongue for several seconds. Man of the world as he was, he looked utterly scandalised. Here in this fair, frail, beautiful form, lay a depth of cynicism which he could not equal personally—which he could not fathom in another, and that other a quite young girl.

"Midge," he said at last, with sincere solemnity, "you horrify me! You've often told me the kind of thing, but this is the first time I've seen you with a fly actually in the web; for I don't think I myself counted, after all. That boy is helplessly in love with you! And you were smiling upon him as though you liked him too." Nunthorp was touched tremulously upon the arm. "Was I?" the girl asked him in a frightened voice. "*Was* I looking like that?"

"I think you were," said Nunthorp, frankly. "And now you calmly scoff at the bare notion of accepting

him. You make my blood run cold, Midge. I think you can have no heart!"

"Do you think that?" she asked, strenuously, as though he had struck her.

"No, no; you know I don't; only after seeing you look at him like that"—

"Honestly I didn't know I was looking in any particular way." Miss Anstruther added in a lowered, softened voice: "If I was—well, it wasn't meant for *him*."

Lord Nunthorp dropped his eyeglass.

"And it wasn't meant for you either," she added, smartly enough.

Lord Nunthorp breathed again, and ventured to recommend an immediate snub in the pale boy's case.

When he had led her back to her chaperone, he felt easier on her account than he had been for a long time. It was obvious to him that the biter was bit at last. The right man was evidently in view, though he was not there at the dance, which was hard on the white-faced youth. Perhaps she was not the right girl for the right man—perhaps he refused to be attracted by her. That would be odd, but not impossible.

That is a woman, through and through, reflected Lord Nunthorp, out of the recess of a *recherché* experience. But Midge would most certainly make him care; she was fascinating enough to capture any man—except himself—if she seriously tried; and he sincerely hoped she was going to try, to succeed, and to live happily ever after. For Nunthorp had now quite a paternal affection for the girl, and he wished her well, from the depths of his man-of-the-world's prematurely gray heart. But he did not like a little scene, with her in it, which he witnessed just before he quitted that party.

"My dance!" said a boy's confident, excited voice, just behind him; and the voice of Miss Anstruther replied, in the coldest of tones, that he "must have made a mistake, for it was not his dance at all."

"But I've got it down," the boy pleaded, as yet only amazed; his face was like marble as Nunthorp watched him; Miss Anstruther was also slightly pale.

"She's doing her duty, for once," thought Nunthorp, to whom the pathos of the incident lay in its utter conventionality. "But she plays a cruel game!"

"You've got it down?" said Miss Anstruther, very clearly, examining her card with ostentatious care. "Excuse me, but there is really some mistake; *I* haven't got *your* name down for *anything* else!"

For an instant Nunthorp held himself in readiness for a scene; he half expected to see the boy, whose white face was now on fire, snatch the card from her, expose her infamy, tear up the card and throw the pieces in her face. His face looked like it for a single instant, and Nunthorp was prepared to protect him if he did it. But the boy went away without a word.

Nunthorp met the girl's eyes with his. He knew she was looking for his approval: he knew she had earned it, by preventing one poor fellow from going the whole humbling length, and he was glad to think that she had taken his advice: but the glance he gave her was very grim. He could not help it. He went away feeling quite unlike himself.

Just outside, in the street, someone brushed past him, sobbing an oath. And Lord Nunthorp became himself again; for the person was Miss Anstruther's last victim.

"*That's* all right," he muttered; "not a broken heart —only broken pride. That's all that's breakable, after all, and it will mend!" He walked home rather pleased with Midge, as he called her, for having done her duty, no matter how late, in at least *one* case. He was vexed with himself for having been stupid about it at the moment. But it delighted him to think that most likely this would be the last case—of the kind. For Lord Nunthorp took always the most good-natured interest in his conspicuous cousin (or whatever she was), with whom he had once played at love himself.

How plain it was to the world that Miss Anstruther was motherless! No mother would have allowed her to behave as she did. With a mother, she would have married one of the many, whether she loved him or not. Her father, whose time was much taken up, was

so blind as to see no harm in her. The only people she had to remonstrate with her were her married sisters. One of these had been Miss Anstruther's chaperone at this dance, where she sat out twice with her kinsman, Lord Nunthorp, and broke a silly youth's pride. This sister ventured to remonstrate—but very gently—when they got home in the small hours.

Miss Anstruther had been silent and subdued during the drive home. She was considerably ashamed of herself. She was more ashamed of having ill-treated the white-faced boy over that dance—now that it was done—than she would have been to reject him after encouragement; the wrong of breaking cold-bloodedly an engagement to dance was altogether out of harmony with her character and her practices. She had cheered up, however, on reaching home; she had found a letter for herself, with three bright blue stamps in the corner, stuck up on the mantelpiece. Her hand had closed eagerly over this letter before the lamp was turned up. She was twisting it between her fingers, under her shawl, while her sister reproved her for her treatment of that boy.

"I know it," she answered, rather dolefully; "I know well enough what a flirt I am. I have never denied it in my life, not even to *them*. But I really never mean them to go so far. And—and I don't think I'm so heartless as I make myself out to be!"

Her sister gazed at her fondly. Her own family, at all events, loved and believed in Miss Anstruther, and held that her faults were on the surface.

"Is there some one you care for after all, Midge dear?" she asked softly.

"There may have been some one all the time," the young girl whispered, her eyelids fallen, her hand squeezing the letter under her shawl.

"Is it—is it Ted Miller?"

Midge looked up into her sister's eyes. Her lip was quivering. She was a girl who seldom cried. She controlled herself before speaking now.

"It was the most hopeless affair of them all," she

said simply; "but—but he was the only one who really meant it."

His letter was against her bosom.

The married sister's eyes had filled.

"You write to each other still, don't you, Midge?"

"Yes—as friends. "Good night, Helen."

"Good night, darling Midge; forgive me for speaking!" Helen whispered kissing her eyes.

"Forgive you? you've said nothing to what I deserve!"

The girl was running up to her room two steps at a time. Ted Miller's letter was pressed to her heart.

Ted Miller had been four years in Australia. He had written to her regularly, the whole time, as her friend; and she had written fairly regularly to him, as his. His was the one refusal in which she had not been a free agent; she had been but seventeen at the time. There was love between them when they parted; there was never a word of it in their letters. He wrote and told her all that he was doing: he was roughing it in the wilderness; he was not making his fortune; he never spoke of coming home. She wrote and told him —nearly all.

A pleasant fire was burning in her room. She lit the candles, and sat down to read the letter. She felt, as always in opening a letter from Ted, that she was going to open a window and let in a cool current of fragrant, fresh air upon an unhealthy, heavy atmosphere; and she noticed, what she had not noticed before, through hiding the letter before the lamp was turned up, that its superscription was not in Ted's hand; the bright blue stamps of New South Wales were really all she had looked at before. She now tore open the envelope with strange misgivings; and the letter turned out to be from the squatter's wife on Ted Miller's station, telling how a buck-jumper had broken Ted Miller's back; and how, before his death, which ensued in a matter of hours, he had directed her to write to his family, and also—but separately—to "his greatest friend."

The fire dulled down, the candle shortened, and in their light Miss Anstruther sat in her dazzling ball-dress, her face as gray as its satin sheen. Her rounded arms were more florid than her face. She moaned a little to herself—she could not cry.

At last she stirred herself. Her limbs were stiff. As she crossed the room, she saw herself from head to foot in her pier-glass—with all her grace of form and motion dead and stiff within her dress. She saw herself thus, but at the time with senseless eyes; the sight first came back to her when she next used that mirror. She was going to a certain drawer; she unlocked it, and drew it out bodily; she carried it to the table where the candles were slowly burning down. The drawer was filled with Miller's letters. "His greatest friend!" They had been merely friends from the day they parted. He had nothing. Out there he had found fortune but a little less inaccessible than at home; he had written her no words of love, for how could there be any hope for them? She had plenty of money, but that was all the more reason why he must have some. His letters were not vulgarized by a single passionate, or sentimental, or high-flown passage. They were the letters of an honest friend; they were the letters of a good soldier—on the losing side, but fighting, not talking about fighting—talking, indeed, of quite other matters. And because these letters had been just what they were, Ted Miller himself had been to a frivolous girl, through frivolous years, what no one else had ever been—not even himself as she had known him best. Their friendship had been pure and strong and strengthening; their love idealized by improbability, and further by not being discussed, and yet further by being written "friendship." His tone to her had been: "Enjoy yourself. I want to hear you're having a good time. *I* am—there's nothing like work." She had answered, very truthfully, that she was doing so; and now he knew how! That was the bitterest thought: that the new knowledge was now his, and she, in his eyes, just what she had been in the eyes of the throng!

She sat down and read all his letters. The pure breath of heaven rose from every leaf. They did not touch her yet: her heart was numb. But the tones that had once come to her ears from every written word came no longer—the voice was silenced. She returned the letters to the drawer. She would keep them till her death.

And yet—would he like that?

She sat very still, trying to answer this question. The candles went out, but a leaden light had crept into the room through the blinds. She thought that he saw her, that he had seen her for weeks, that she had been grieving him the whole time, that she might please him now. There had been nothing morbid in Miller. He was the one man she had known who would wish her *not* to keep his letters.

She rose resolutely from her chair, and, with difficulty rekindled her fire; it ruined her elaborate dress, but she was glad never to wear this one again. It did not seem to her that she was about to do anything cruel or unnatural. She was going to do violence to her own feelings only. It would please the strong soul of Miller that she was not going to keep his letters, to read them in her better moods, and less and less as the years went on. For her own part, she felt she would like to have them a little longer. It was a subtle sense of sacrifice for Miller's sake—her first—which nerved her to burn his letters. Overstrung as she was, she burnt them every one, and without a tear.

A half-leaf happened to escape. She picked it out of the fender when the rest were burnt black, and her heart was beginning to ache for what she had done. She took it to the window, and read on the crisp, scorched paper the ordinary end of an ordinary letter—the end of all was, as ever: "Yours always, E. M."

Without a moment's warning, her tears rattled upon the hot paper; she pressed it passionately to her lips; she flung herself upon the bed in a paroxysm of helpless agony.

The colonel's orderly was of that sort who, if he had been a woman and employed in a kitchen, would have scolloped the oysters with scissors, and have built the range fire in the oven. His exploits *apropos* of Madame Dorville's dinner have been translated from the French by Slack Davis.

A SAGACIOUS ORDERLY.

THE sergeant-majors were awaiting the colonel's arrival. Not a word was breathed, for the air seemed charged with electricity. The fact is, the great chief's orderly had been imprisoned the evening before (no one knew why), and the commandant himself appeared anxious.

Some alleged that Private Loumy, the colonel's orderly, full of solicitude for his superior, had thought it a part of his duty to taste the wine before serving it at table. Others, with more elevated ideas, gravely surmised that the orderly had abused his master's confidence, and betrayed France by divulging to Germany certain secret plans of attack. They all, however, expected a storm, and invoked the shade of Franklin.

Suddenly each one stood up, examined the position of his feet, curled his mustache, and began to assume the most complete immobility; the clock had just struck nine, the exact moment when the colonel usually appeared at the door of the guard-house.

But on that day he did not arrive until a quarter-of-an-hour after the usual time, and then dictated more calmly than usual this simple line—"Nothing new today; comma; the band will be dispensed with; full stop. That will do."

The astonishment was such that it degenerated into positive fear. Assuredly the affair must be serious, since the colonel had shown such composure; there could be no doubt that the country was in danger through the faithlessness, nay, the treason, of the colonel's orderly.

Each one withdrew, without daring to look behind

him, for fear of being accused. The Commandant Toulouret, bravest of the brave, alone remained, ready to support the shock. Stirring neither head nor foot, he stood motionless near the colonel, who was signing some papers.

"My orderly has placed me in a most awkward position," suddenly said the great chief.

"Undoubtedly, colonel, it is a very serious matter."

"What, then, you know?"

"Oh, no, colonel, not at all!" quickly replied Toulouret, who feared to be taken for an accomplice.

"Well, just imagine, this booby—By the by, is he still imprisoned?"

"Oh, yes, colonel, under double lock and key. I placed him in solitary confinement; and, moreover, his papers are ready for the council of war."

"For the council of war? Goodness gracious, commandant! What a pace you are going at!"

"But I thought that for so serious a case, nothing less than a council of war, colonel——"

"Of what crime do you imagine him guilty?"

"High treason, they say, colonel."

"Treason? What treason?"

"Having disclosed to Germany certain secret plans of attack."

"Secret plans! What secret plans?—And disclosed by Loumy!!!"

The colonel burst into loud laughter.

"Well then, colonel, I can make nothing of it at all."

"I had this idiot shut up just to put a little sense in him. You may release him today. Here, commandant, you shall judge of this case yourself. Yesterday I said to Loumy, 'I don't feel very well to-day; go and tell Madame Dorville, at whose house I was to dine, that I cannot accept her flattering invitation for this evening. And, Loumy, as it is six o'clock, bring me my dinner when you return.'

"On his return, I sat down to table. My orderly first served me with exquisite soup; then a salmon of prime quality; then pheasants; then a prodigious quantity of

delicate viands of various kinds. I could see no end to it.

"'There must be a banquet going on at the mess this evening,' I said.

"'Oh! colonel, that is not all,' he replies; 'there's champagne, and the lady says to me, "Your colonel must drink my health in a glass of this."'

"'Idiot!' I cried, 'where did you get my dinner from?'

"'Why, colonel! Didn't you say to me, "Bring me my dinner when you come back"? So I says to the lady, "You must put the colonel's dinner in a basket."'

"Judge of my anger, commandant.

"A happy thought came to me,—the only way to make amends for this fellow's stupidity.

"'Run quick to a florist's,' I said to Loumy. 'Buy a nice bouquet, and take it, with my compliments, to Madame Dorville. Hurry!'

"In half-an-hour Loumy returned in high spirits.

"'Well! you left the bouquet with the lady? I hope you chose one that was nice and fresh?'

"'Oh, yes, colonel! and the lady,—she wanted to give a franc.'

"'Which, of course, you did not accept!'

"'Oh! never, colonel; and I said to the lady, "Humbly asking Madame's pardon, the bouquet cost me ten francs." And then the lady she gave me ten francs, and here they are!'

"That's my case, commandant!"

ROMANCE.

Vol. V. APRIL, 1892. No. 3.

CONTENTS.

THE COUSIN-SEEKER OF BERLIN . . *Charles Dickens*
Who found a "cousin" worth having.

A PERILOUS HOUR . . . . . *Anonymous*
Of the sort that drives men mad.

POVARINA . . . . . *Emile Zola*
The tale of a supernatural penny.

BROWN OF NEVADA . . . *Mrs. Frank McCarthy*
One of the best of customers.

THE ROBBER OF PIROCHE . . . *Alexander Dumas*
Who was clever, but not quite clever enough.

WIDOW SIMPSON'S SPOONS . . . . *Anonymous*
Which turned up in a queer place.

A CARELESS LIBRARIAN . . *Emily Frances Jenkinson*
But also a very lucky one.

TIMBUCTOO . . . . . *Guy de Maupassant*
A sketch full of the spirit of the East.

THE CASTLE OF CARDS . . . . *Maurice Lefevre*
"A daisy" among castles.

A SYMPHONY IN GREEN . . . . . *Paul Arène*
A lesson for small boys.

ACROSS RANNOCH MOOR . . *Blackwood's Magazine*
For jealous lovers and—artists.

A MIDNIGHT DRIVE . . . . . *Anonymous*
Which was not an exhilarating one.

MY FRIEND DR. SELSAM . . *Erckmann-Chatrian*
A learned and very amusing eclectic.

WHITMORE'S MASTERPIECE . *Frederic Ernest Holman*
One would like to have seen it.

CATCHING A COOLIE . *Lieut. J. H. Scott, U. S. R. M.*
Or wasn't it a coolie?

THE HIGHEST PRIZE . . . *Emilia Pardo Bazan*
A Spanish lottery story.

SELWYN UTTERTON'S NEMESIS . . . *Grant Allen*
A terrible one—but he deserved it.

The halcyon days of eccentric and arbitrary monarchs are almost past,—unless the young ruler of Germany revives them. Frederick the Great was one of the most noted of these, and the incident recorded below by the pen of Charles Dickens may well have been true. Since the story lives, so far as we know, however, in the imaginative sketch which Dickens made of it, it may properly be included in the pages of ROMANCE.

THE COUSIN-SEEKER OF BERLIN.

ON a dreary autumn day, more than a hundred years ago, a heavy travelling carriage was slowly lumbering along the muddy road from Potsdam to Berlin. Within it was one person only, who took no heed of the slowness of the travelling; but, leaning back in a corner, was arranging a multiplicity of papers contained in a small portfolio, and making notes in a pocket-book. Since he was dressed in a plain, dark military uniform, it was fair to suppose that this gentleman belonged to the Prussian army; but to which grade of it, nobody could determine, as all tokens of rank had been avoided. A dreary November evening was closing in, and though the rain had for a time ceased, yet dark masses of clouds flying through the sky gave warning that a "weeping darkness" was at hand. The road grew heavier and heavier, at least so it should have seemed to a foot traveller who was ploughing his way through its mire; and so, doubtless, it did seem to the carriage horses, who at last floundered along so slowly that the pedestrian whom they had overtaken kept, easily, by the side of the coach, though at a respectful distance, certainly, after the first bucketful of mud that it splashed over him. The gentleman inside the coach, when he could see no longer, shut up his portfolio, and returned the pocket-book to its place in the breast-lining of his coat. He then roused himself to look out of the window, and judge, from the mud and darkness, how far it might be to Berlin. For the first time he per-

ceived that a muddy young man was walking at a little distance from his horses. Though more than reasonably travel-stained, he trudged on as if his limbs were strong and his heart light. Through the drizzle and the darkness all that could be seen of his face was sensible and good-tempered. He had just finished a pipe as he attracted the traveller's attention, and was in the act of shaking out the ashes and replacing the pipe in a wallet slung over his back when he heard himself addressed in the manner following, and in rather an authoritative tone of voice:

"Hollo! young man, whither are you bound this stormy-looking night?"

"That is more than I can tell you, not being at home in this part of the world. My wish is to reach Berlin; but if I find a resting-place before I get there, to that I am bound, for I am a-weary."

"I should think you must have two hours' walk before you," was the unsatisfactory remark that followed.

The young man made no reply; and, after a short pause, the stranger said:

"If it pleases you to rest on the step of the carriage for a few minutes, you are welcome so to do, Herr What's-your-name."

"My name is Heinrich Meyer," replied the young man, "one of those who, wisely, never refuse the small benefit because the larger one is not to be obtained." He thankfully accepted the not very clean place allotted to him.

From inside the window the next question put to Heinrich was:

"What are you going to Berlin for?"

"To hunt for some cousins," was the answer.

"And, pray, who may they be?" asked the unknown.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I have not an idea who they are, nor where to look for them. Indeed, it is more than doubtful whether I have so much as an acquaintance in Berlin, much less a relation."

The questioner, who should have been an American colonel, looked amused and astonished as he suggested:

"Surely there must be some other motive for your going to Berlin, or what could have put this idea in your head?"

"Why," replied Heinrich, "I have just become a clergyman, without the smallest chance of getting anything to do in my own neighborhood. I have no relative to help me, and not quite money enough to find me in necessaries."

"But," said the Prussian, "what on earth has this to do with cousins in Berlin?"

"Well, now, who knows? Many of my fellow-students have got good appointments; and, whenever I asked them to let me know how it was done, the answer always was, 'a cousin gave it to me,' or, 'I got it through the interest of a cousin who lives at Berlin.' Now, as I find none of these useful cousins live in the country, I must go without their help, or else hunt for them in Berlin."

This was all said in a comical, dry way, so that his listener could not refrain from laughing; but he made no comment. However, he pulled out a piece of paper, and began to write upon it. When he had finished he turned round to Heinrich, saying that he observed he had been smoking, and that he felt inclined to do the same, but had forgotten to bring tinder with him. Could Herr Meyer oblige him with a light?

"Certainly, with great pleasure," was the prompt reply; and Heinrich, taking a tinder-box out of his wallet, immediately began to strike a light. Now, it has been said that the evening was damp. It was so damp that there seemed little enough prospect of the tinder's lighting; moreover, the wind blew the sparks out almost before they fell.

"Well, if your cousins are not more easily to be got at than your light is, I pity you, young sir," was the sole remark to which the stranger condescended as he watched Heinrich's laborious endeavors.

"*Nil desperandum* is my motto," answered the young man; and when the words were scarcely uttered the light had been struck. In his delight at succeeding,

Heinrich jumped up on the carriage step, and leaning through the window, thrust the tinder eagerly in the direction of the gentleman's face. "Hurra, sir, puff away!"

After a short pause, during which time the stranger had been puffing at his pipe, he removed it from his mouth, and addressed Heinrich in this way:

"I have been thinking over what you have been telling me, and perhaps, in an humble way, I might be able to assist you, and thus act the part of the cousin you are seeking. At all events, when you get to Berlin take this note," handing him the slip of paper on which he had been writing; "take this note to Marshal Grumbkow, who is somewhat of a friend of mine, and who will, I think, be glad to oblige me. But, mind! Do exactly as he bids you, and abide strictly by his advice. If he says he will help you, rely upon it he will keep his word; but he is rather eccentric, and the way he sets about doing a kindness may perhaps seem strange to you. And now," he continued, "as the road is improved, I must hurry on the horses, and so bid you good-evening, hoping you will prosper in your new career."

As Heinrich began to express his thanks for the good wishes of his unknown friend, the signal was given to increase the speed of the horses, and before he had time to make any acknowledgments he found himself alone again. The young man was no little astonished at what had taken place; and, as he gazed on the slip of paper, could not help wondering whether any good would come of it. These were the only words written on it:

"DEAR MARSHAL:—If you can forward the views of the bearer, Heinrich Meyer, you will oblige your friend, F.

"Let me know the result of the interview with him."

"Time will prove this, as it does all other things," thought Heinrich, as he proceeded on his way. Somehow or other the road appeared less wearisome, and he

felt less tired and footsore, since receiving the mysterious bit of paper. Hope was stronger within him than she had been for many a day; and on her wings he was carried pleasantly along, so that he reached Berlin by nightfall.

The noise and bustle of the capital was new to him; and he found some little difficulty in making his way to the gasthaus, to which he had been recommended by the pastor of his parish. The pastor, having been once in Berlin, was considered, in his part of the world, an oracle in all matters connected with town life.

The inn was, however, found at last, and, after a frugal supper and a good night's rest, our friend arose, ready to hope and believe everything from the mysterious note, which he started forth to deliver immediately after breakfast.

Obliged to ask his way to Marshal Grumbkow's, he was amused and surprised at the astonishment depicted on the countenances of those persons of whom he made the inquiry, as if they would say, "What business can you have with the Marshal Grumbkow?"

The house was, however, at last gained, and, having delivered his missive to a servant, Heinrich awaited the result in the hall. In a few minutes the servant returned, and requested him, in the most respectful manner, to follow him to the Marshal's presence. Arrived there, he was received most courteously; and the Marshal made many inquiries as to his past life and future prospects; requested to be told the name of the village or town in which he had been last residing; the school in which he had been educated; at what inn he was living in Berlin, and so forth. But still no allusion was made either to the note or the writer of it. The interview lasted about twenty minutes; at the end of which time the Marshal dismissed him, desiring that he would call again on that day fortnight.

Heinrich employed the interval in visiting the lions of the town. There was a grand review of the troops on the King's birthday; and, like a loyal subject, our friend went to have a reverent stare at his Majesty,

whom he had never seen. At one point of the review the King stopped almost opposite to Heinrich; and then was suggested to him, as the reader probably suspects, that, after all, he must have seen that face somewhere before. Was it the friend who hailed him in the muddy road? Impossible! How should a King be travelling at that time of the day? At any rate, it vexed him to think that he had not treated the gentleman in the coach in a very ceremonious manner. He had thrust tinder at his nose and cried to him, "Puff away."

At last the time appointed for his second visit to the Marshal arrived. His reception was again most favorable. The Marshal begged him to be seated at the table at which he was writing, and proceeded at the same time to business. Unlocking a drawer and bringing forth a small bundle of papers, he asked Heinrich, as he drew them forth, one by one, if he knew in whose handwriting the various superscriptions were? Heinrich answered that to the best of his belief one was that of Herr Mudel, his former schoolmaster; another, that of Dr. Von Hummer, the principal of such a college, and so on.

"Quite right," remarked the Marshal; "and perhaps it may not surprise you to hear that I have written to these different gentlemen to inquire your character, that I may know with whom I have to deal, and not be working in the dark." As he said these words, the Marshal fixed his eyes on Heinrich, to see what effect they had; but the young man's countenance was unabashed; he evidently feared no evil report.

"I feel bound," continued the Marshal, "to tell you that all that they say of you is most favorable, and I am equally bound to believe and act upon their opinions. I have now to beg of you to follow me to a friend's house."

The Marshal descended a private staircase leading to the courtyard, crossing which he passed through a gate in the wall into a narrow side street, down which he conducted Heinrich, till they arrived at a private entrance to the palace. Heinrich began to get exceed-

ingly nervous; the conviction that his idea was not a mere trick of the imagination became stronger and stronger. Could he have had his own wish, Heinrich Meyer would at that moment have been forty miles from Berlin. At last, as he found himself following Grumbkow even into the palace, he could not refrain from exclaiming, "Indeed, Herr Marshal, there must be some mistake!"

No answer was vouchsafed as the Marshal continued to lead him through various galleries and apartments, until at last they reached the door of one situated in a corner of a wing of the palace, where the Marshal's knock was answered by a short "Come in." As the door opened, one glance sufficed to convince Heinrich that his friend in the mud and the King were one and the same person. The poor cousin-seeker, greatly confused, knelt before Frederick William and began faltering out contrite apologies.

"Rise, young man," said the King; "you have not committed treason. How on earth could you guess who I was? I should not travel quietly if I meant to be everywhere recognized."

After reassuring Heinrich, the King told him that he was prepared to do what he could to push him forward in the profession he had chosen. "But first," he said, "I must hear how you preach. On Sunday next, therefore, you shall preach before me; but mind, I shall choose the text. You may retire."

By the time Heinrich Meyer reached his own room in the inn he had fixed in his mind the fact that he was to preach to the King. The fact was only too clear, and all that he could do was to set about his sermon as soon as he should have been furnished with the text. For the remainder of that day he never stirred out; every step on the stair was to his ears that of the bearer of the text.

Nevertheless, evening and night passed, and the next day was far advanced; but still no text. What was to be done? There were only two days before Sunday! He must go and consult the Marshal; but the latter

could give him no further information. All he could do was to promise that, if the King sent the text through him, it should be forwarded with the utmost possible dispatch.

That day and the next passed, and yet Heinrich heard nothing from either King or Marshal. Only an official intimation had been sent, as was customary, that he had been selected as the preacher on the following Sunday at the Chapel Royal.

If it had not been that Heinrich knew himself to possess no mean powers of oratory, and that he could even extemporize in case of emergency, he would certainly have run away from Berlin and abjured his discovered cousin. As it was, he awaited the course of events, and fortified himself by prayer and philosophy for the momentous hour. Sunday morning arrived; but no text.

Heinrich went to the church appointed, and was conducted to the seat always set apart for the preacher of the day. The King, with the royal family, occupied their accustomed places.

The service commenced; but no text. The prayers were ended, and, while the organ pealed forth its solemn sounds, the preacher was led to the pulpit. The congregation were astonished, not only at his youthfulness, but at his being an utter stranger.

The pulpit steps were gained, and the thought flashed across Heinrich's mind that possibly he should find the text placed for him on the desk.

But, as he was on the point of mounting the stairs, an officer of the royal household delivered to him a folded piece of paper, saying, "His Majesty sends you the text."

After having recited the preliminary prayers the preacher opened the paper, and lo! it was blank; not a word was written on it. What was to be done? Heinrich deliberately examined the white sheet, and, after a short pause, held it up before the congregation, saying, "His Majesty has furnished the text for my sermon. But you may perceive that nothing whatever is upon this sheet of paper. 'Out of nothing God created

the world.' I shall, therefore, take the creation for the subject of my discourse this morning."

In accordance with this decision the preacher went through the whole of the first chapter of Genesis, in a masterly way, his style being forcible and clear, and his fluency of language remarkable. His audience, accustomed to the King's eccentricities, were far more astonished at the dexterity with which the preacher had extricated himself from the difficulty than at the dilemma in which he had been placed. At last the sermon was ended, the congregation dismissed, and Heinrich found himself in the sacristy receiving the congratulations of several dignitaries of the church.

Heinrich ventured to express his amazement at the singular proceeding of the King, but was told that he could only have arrived recently from the provinces, if he did not know that such vagaries were quite common to his Majesty. In the midst of the conversation a messenger arrived to conduct him to the royal presence. Being totally unaware what impression his sermon might have made upon the King, the cousin-seeker rather dreaded the approaching audience. But Heinrich had scarcely crossed the threshold of the King's room, when his Majesty jumped up and thrust a roll of paper into the young preacher's hand, exclaiming, "Hurra, sir, puff away; take this for the light you gave me!"

Then, throwing himself back in a chair, he laughed heartily at the young preacher's look of surprise and confusion. The latter scarcely knew what reply to make, or what to do; but just as he had got as far as "your Majesty," the King interrupted him, saying, "Make no fine speeches; go home quietly and examine the contents of the paper. You came to Berlin to seek a cousin; you have found one who, if you go on steadily, will not neglect you."

It is hardly necessary to add that the roll of paper contained a good appointment at the University of Berlin, and made Heinrich Meyer one of the royal preachers.

Stories of men who go mad from fright are not uncommon: but seldom is one told with such thrilling realism as that which follows. The origin of the tale is unknown.

A PERILOUS HOUR.

I WAS apprenticed to a decorative painter, but being of a bold, danger-loving turn, I ran away to sea before my time was out. After some years, I tired of a maritime life; and having married and determined to stick to the shore, I got work with a builder whose peculiar line lay in erecting tall chimneys. I had always a very cool head, and could stand on elevations that made most men dizzy, and so I was soon a favorite hand with my master.

We had on one occasion to fasten a lightning-conductor which had sprung near the top of a very high chimney, and Mr. Staming chose myself and one James Colly to do it, as the most daring of his men. About half a dozen of us went that morning with a hand-cart, containing the necessary ropes, blocks, the kite, and a box or cradle. Having flown the kite, and dropped its line across the top of the chimney, we soon drew up a rope, at the end of which was a block, through which ran the line whereby we were to be drawn up.

Colly had only been married a fortnight; and as we stepped into the cradle, the men banteringly asked him if he hadn't a last dying speech to leave for his wife; and then, Mr. Staming having shaken hands with us, and bid us be cool and steady, we were drawn slowly up. It was known all over the town that the conductor was to be fixed, and the streets were thronged with starers. Colly was very quiet; and when I waved my cap to the people, he said snappishly that this was no time for such folly, and that he thought I might think of better things than how to amuse these gaping fools, who, he dared say, desired no better fun than to see us meet with an accident.

I had come up in the best heart, thinking, indeed, nothing about the danger we incurred; but as we drew nearer and nearer to the top, and had nothing, as it seemed, belonging to this world near to us but this straining rope, I began to see the peril of the undertaking. What Colly thought of it, I don't know—he sat at the bottom of the cradle, never looking out, though I told him he would do better to keep his eyes about him, so that he might grow used to the height.

Good heaven! what was this? Here we were within a yard of the top projecting coping, and still they were winding away, without slacking speed in the least! I guessed in a moment that they mistook our height, and that with the great purchase of that windlass the rope would be broken when the cradle came to the block. I sprang up, and catching the rope, climbed hand over hand to the coping. Colly, too, sprang up and followed me. He, too, got up safe; and still they went on winding up, till the rope sung again with the strain.

Then it snapped, and cradle, hauling line, and the main rope with its block, fell down. Thus were we two poor men left in a most desperate situation.

Poor Colly was completely dazed with affright; and the moment he got on the coping, which was only a foot-and-a-half broad, he called out, "Where can I pray? where can I kneel and pray?" And so I said, very solemnly, "Sit down, Jem; God will hear us if we pray to him sitting down."

The color of his face was a transparent blue; and it was distorted and twitching, as if he was in a fit. His eyes were very wild, and drawn into a squint, and he couldn't sit steady, but swayed his body backward and forward, so that I felt certain that he must topple over.

"Come, Jem, lad," I said, thinking to take the fright off him; "it's bad enough, but it can't be mended. Hitch up a bit, and put your arm round the rod—may be it will steady you."

"Where are you? and where is this rod?" he asked, in a very hollow voice, though he was looking straight at me, and the rod was only a foot or two to his left.

By this I knew that he was gone blind with the fright; and self-preservation said, Don't go near him: but then I remembered his new-wedded wife, and that, taking him all through, he was always a very decent fellow; and I thought how I should have liked him to have done if I had been in his case; so I determined to run a bit of risk in his favor. Of course, I durst not get on my feet; but working myself on by my hands, I got to him, and putting my arm round his waist, and telling him as cheerily as I could to keep cool, I got him with his arm round the rod. It had, however, sprung the stapling for five yards down, and was so loose that it swayed with him, and I expected any minute to see him falling head and heels down, and the rod tearing away with him.

There was great bustle down below; people were running round the yard and pushing to get in, but as yet there were but some score of men at the foot of the chimney, and, by close looking, I saw them put somebody on a board, and carry him gently away towards the engine-house. One of the men walked after with a hat in his hand; I then knew that somebody had been hurt by the falling cradle, and that it must be poor Mr. Staming, as none of our men wore hats. Not a face was turned up to us. I learned afterwards that our men were so taken up with sorrow that so good a man and so kind a master should be killed, that for a while they had never a thought about us; and the people outside imagined that we had come down with the cradle, so thus were we left in isolation for twenty minutes.

While I was watching them below, feeling very sorry for my poor master, I was startled by a wild laugh from Colly, who began making cat-calls, and yelling as if he was possessed. Then I knew that he was gone mad. Even now I tremble when I think of that time; it was horrible to peer down the shaft, black and sooty, and yawning, and scarcely less so to look outside and see a flight of pigeons sweeping round at considerably less height than we were. Then Colly—thank God, he was so dazed that he could not see me—called my name

three times, as I sat fairly cringing in dread that his sight might clear, and with a ghastly grin, and chewing with his mouth, he began working himself towards me. I worked away from him as noiselessly as I could, with every hair of my head standing on end. He followed me twice round that horrid coping, making most hideous noises, and then being come a second time to the rod, he got an idea in his muddled head that I was fallen over, for he never lost a sense of where he was all through this trying time. Then he tried to get on his feet; but, at the risk of my own life, I could not let the poor fellow rush on certain death, without one more effort; and I cried out for him to sit down, and he cowered down like a whipped dog, all trembling. I suppose it had been put into his head that I was a dead man speaking to him.

That morning my wife had got a letter from her sister in Canada, and as there were parts we could not make out, I had put it in my pocket, intending to get our time-keeper to read it for me. It had a scrap of uncovered paper at the bottom; and by another good providence, I happened to have a bit of red lead-pencil in my pocket. I wrote on the paper, "Get us down—Colly's gone mad;" this I shut in my tobacco-box, and was fortunate enough to drop just at the feet of two men who were standing by the engine-house door.

Directly all was bustle to rescue us. They got the kite up again, and I watched it mounting slowly—slowly; and when the slack twine fell between Colly and myself, I took it in my hand and could have kissed it. Poor Colly, with his teeth chattering, still fancied I was a spirit, and I did all I could to favor that idea until they got another cradle up to us. Then having got him in, I scrambled in myself; and clutching him fast, I shouted for them to lower; and so we were got down, he wrestling and fighting with me all the way.

He was in a mad-house for some months, and then went to scavengering, for he never could face any height again; and I have never had the same clear head since that adventure.

This beautiful fairy-tale by M. Emile Zola is, after all, not so much a fairy-tale as an allegory. In the end, little Povarina learned how to dispense her charities. Other philanthropists may well glean a lesson from her experience, the history of which was translated by Mrs. Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer for the Baltimore *American*.

POVARINA.

Once upon a time there was a poor little girl so pale and delicate that it seemed a shame to make her work, as her friends did, like any rough, stout woman employed in coarse farm labor. She had the wistful eyes, the sad, beseeching look of those who suffer but who never complain. A wealthy farmer had once met her in the woods clad in thin rags and carrying a great bundle of fire wood; and, having sold his grain at a big price and being in good humor, had offered her a warm stuff gown for the approaching winter. But Povarina had replied, "On the church porch sits a poor old man with nothing but an old smock frock to keep him warm. Won't you buy him a warm winter vest? and I shall feel warm whenever I look at him." I do not know her real name. She always went by the name of Povarina. Some said, because she was so poor herself, and some, because her heart was with the poor.

Poor Povarina had once slept in a rich cradle with its curtains trimmed with lace, and had had costly playthings and a beautiful nursery. But one morning her mamma did not get up as usual, and, when she cried because they would not let her go into her room, they told her that one of God's holy angels had come down during the night and carried her dear mother back with him to heaven. Only a few months before, her dear papa had likewise gone away. The poor little thing imagined that papa had called mamma to come to him in heaven, and thought they could not long live happily without their little girl, and that very soon they would send another angel to call their child to join them. So she waited at first patiently, but by and by the remem-

brance of those days faded away. She hardly recollected the laced cradle and the costly playthings. She was no longer a young lady, but a forlorn, hard-working village girl. I daresay some one had enriched himself at her expense by speculation or peculation.

All she remembered was that one morning when she woke she found by her bedside her Uncle Will and her Aunt Wilhelmine. She was afraid of them, for they did not kiss her. Aunt Wilhelmine dressed her in a coarse dark frock, and Uncle Will took her roughly by the hand and led her to the poor cottage where she ever since had lived. That was all her little story. She was very tired sometimes, and the blessed angel had never come to deliver her.

Will and his wife Wilhelmine had also been rich formerly. But Will had loved good company and riotous living, Wilhelmine had loved silk gowns and fine ribbons, till at last a day came when Will found his barrels and his demijohns and his purse empty, and Wilhelmine sold her big looking-glass to pay the baker.

Till these misfortunes came they had lived at ease, were free and careless with their wealth and gave away liberally, partly because it enhanced their own importance, partly because it rather amused them to see people happy. But as soon as they lost their own money their views on this point changed. They envied others the riches they themselves had lost, and were so absorbed in their own misfortunes that they became harsh and unfeeling to others.

Povarina shared all their privations, which indeed fell upon her more heavily than on them. They made her work beyond her strength; they sent her out into the fields to glean in summer heat; they drove her out to pick up wood under the snow in winter. When she came back she had to sweep, to wash, to put everything tidy in the cottage. Yet the poor little creature never complained. Her remembrance of happier things had faded so far off behind her on her life's horizon that she could not realize that any one could live without harsh treatment and tears.

One afternoon—I can't imagine what holiday could have been so honored by Will and Wilhelmine—they gave her a bright new penny and told her she might go and play till bed-time. Povarina, on hearing this, walked slowly into the village. She could not think how she should spend her penny, and she did not know much about amusing herself.

Pondering over her good luck, she entered the main street. On her left, near the church, was a small store with dolls and sugar-plums displayed in its gay windows. When it was lighted up at night it was so beautiful that the village children looked at it as the Peri looked at Paradise. That very evening a group of little creatures with open mouths stood on the sidewalk flattening their noses against the window-panes, wrapt in wonder and admiration. Povarina almost envied them their boldness. She stood looking from the middle of the street, with both hands holding together her poor rags. She felt a little proud of having a whole penny, and was trying to choose the plaything she would like to buy with such a sum. At last she settled on a doll, with real hair, dressed like a grown person. It was a large doll, and wore a white silk robe. She had never seen anything so beautiful, she thought, unless it were a representation of the Holy Virgin.

The little girl went forward a few steps toward the shop window. She felt very shy about going in to ask the price of the doll-lady, and as she hesitated, she saw near her, sitting upon a large stone, a very poor woman hushing a suffering baby on her bosom. Povarina stopped and turned away from the big doll. Her little heart was touched by the low wails of the poor babe. This time she was not shy. She walked up to the woman and child in haste and gave them her new penny.

The poor mother looked up in the face of Povarina. She had seen her stop and look hard at the playthings, and she understood the whole story. She took the penny with tears in her eyes, and held in her own hand for a moment the little hand which gave it her.

"'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least

of these,'" she murmured, "'ye have done it unto Me.' My child," she added, "I accept your bright new penny. I know you would be sorry if I did not take it. But do not you want something for yourself? I am not so poor but that I can grant you one of your wishes."

As she spoke the woman's eyes shone like the stars, and round her head flickered bright rays like a crown composed of sunshine. The infant lay asleep upon her lap, smiling divinely.

Povarina shook her head.

"No, madam," she replied; "I don't want anything. I thought I should have liked that doll, yet I daresay Aunt Wilhelmine would have broken it for me. But if you don't like to take my penny for nothing, give me a real good kiss in exchange."

The beggar woman bent forward and kissed her on the forehead. As she kissed her, Povarina felt as she had never felt before. She was tired and sad no longer, and her kind little heart felt kinder than ever.

"My child," continued the poor woman, "I wish to show you how much I value your bright penny. I, too, had just one penny before you gave it to me. Princes and great ladies have sometimes flung me purses full of gold, but I never offered them my penny. Take it, and if anything happens in consequence, be guided by the dictates of your charitable soul."

She gave her the penny with these words. It was a large old copper coin, clipped round its edge, with a big hole bored in its middle. It was so defaced that it was impossible to make out where it had been coined, only on one side it seemed to have a crown with rays on it.

Povarina, seeing what a shabby coin it was, accepted it, thinking it could not be of much value, looking on it not as money that would pass, but as a little keep-sake from the poor beggar.

"Alas!" she thought, "the poor woman does not know what she is talking about. Princes and great ladies would not want her penny. It is such a shabby penny that I doubt if it would buy a roll. I should not even like to give it away."

The woman, whose eyes kept on shining more and more, smiled. As if she had been reading Povarina's thoughts she said kindly, "Take it, and you will see."

So Povarina took the penny, not wishing to seem ungrateful. She looked aside to find her pocket, and when she looked again, the woman, to her great astonishment, had disappeared.

Povarina slept at the top of the house, in a sort of garret chamber, which was used as a lumber room. On moonlight nights she went pleasantly to her bed; at other times she crept into it in the darkness. Her poor bedstead was four boards covered by an old straw mattress, full of holes. To-night the moon was shining, and she kneeled down in the clear light beside an old black box and said her prayers. Then rising, she undid her gown. The frock slipped off, and out of the pocket fell a perfect shower of pennies.

Povarina watched them as they rolled over the floor. She was thunder-stricken. She stooped down and picked them up one by one. She piled them up on the black box. She did not count them, for she could only count up to fifty, and she knew there were a great many hundreds of them. When she could find no more upon the floor, she picked up her frock, and knew by its weight that her pocket was still full of pennies. For a quarter-of-an-hour she kept pulling out handfuls of pence without coming to the end of them. At last she found there was only one left. She drew it out. It was the coin she had received from the poor woman.

Like a good little, careful girl she always carried a housewife in the pocket of her apron. She got a bit of old rag and made a bag of it. It was very narrow. Her little slim hand could hardly get down into its depth, for rag was scarce and Povarina in a hurry. Then she put the poor woman's penny at the bottom and slipped back into her bag handful after handful of the pence that lay on the black box, where she had piled them. Each handful seemed to fill the bag, which a few moments after was as empty as ever. When

she had got them all in there was room for four times as many more.

Then Povarina hid her bag under her pillow, and, wearied out with all the day's experience, she fell asleep. She laughed a happy laugh even in her dreams, for she dreamed about the alms she would be able to distribute next day to all the poor people of the neighboring village.

Povarina's first thought when she woke up was that it was all a dream. But she pulled out her little bag and found her dream was true. It was heavier than when she went to sleep, and the child perceived the penny had been at work all night long.

She dressed herself in haste and ran downstairs, holding her wooden shoes in her hand, that she might not make a noise and wake her aunt and uncle. She had the bag under her dress, pressed close against her bosom. Uncle Will and his wife Wilhelmine lay fast asleep and did not waken. Once out of the house she set off running, and hurried away in such haste that she left the door open behind her.

It was a bitter cold morning in December. Day was just breaking. The snow lay on the ground. Earth and sky looked of the same color. Povarina walked quickly down the road that led into the village.

That winter there was great suffering in that part of the country. The weather had been very cold, and wheat bread was so dear that only rich people could buy it. Beggars and tramps had grown so numerous that they seemed to people the highways.

Povarina opened her little bag, for, as she came in sight of the houses of the village, she saw a blind man led by a little girl, who looked at her sadly, but asked no alms. Povarina was so ill-dressed that the little girl supposed her to be poor also.

"Father!" said Povarina to the old man, "hold out your hands. Our Lord has sent me to you."

She spoke to the man because the fingers of the little girl would be too small to hold her bounty. The blind man had enormous hands. She had to pull out seven

handfuls of bright pennies from her purse before she filled them. Then she gave the little girl a double handful for herself, and passed on into the village.

She wanted to reach the church, where the old people of the parish used to sit upon the porch waiting for charity. God's house protected them from the north wind, and the morning sun shone full into their faces. But before she got there she was stopped again. At the corner of an alley sat a young woman who appeared to have passed the night there. Her hands were crossed upon her breast, her eyes were closed; pain was all passed, and death seemed near her. Povarina stood before her with her hands full of bright pence, uncertain how to get her to take them; and as she stood she wept, for she thought she might have come too late to save her.

"Good woman," said she, touching her gently on the shoulder, "please try and take this money. Go and get something to eat at the Croix d'Or and finish your nap before the kitchen fire."

At the sound of this kind voice the poor woman opened her eyes and stretched out her hand. She seemed to fancy she was still asleep, and that one of God's angels was speaking to her.

Then Povarina hurried to the market-place. The usual crowd sat in the church porch, sharing the first rays of the sun. Povarina began throwing handfuls of pennies into the men's hats and women's aprons, sometimes missing her aim, so that many big pennies rolled down into the street. She did not count the coins she gave, dear child! and the little bag held out wonderfully. It never grew empty. It seemed to puff and swell as the little girl drew out each handful. It overflowed like a vase too full of liquor. The poor people on the porch were amazed at this shower of charity.

Leaving the poor on the church porch with all their pockets full, she walked away into the country. As she passed along the highway all those whom she relieved arose and followed her.

It was a pretty sight to see this golden-haired young child, with her eyes bright and her smile of childish pride, clad in her ragged cotton frock, followed by that brotherhood and sisterhood of poverty. It was her family. She thought not of herself. She walked on stoutly, proud of feeling herself charged to be their help and minister, radiant with the happiness of being of such use, and followed by an escort of those whom she had blessed, in triumphal procession.

In one place, as she was crossing a meadow, a flock of sparrows perched on the snow before her. The poor little things were almost starved, and chirped pitifully, asking for the food they could no longer pick up for themselves. Povarina stopped, grieved to find sufferers with whom her pennies could not be shared. She looked down sadly at her bag. The sparrows flocked around her. They seemed to say, "We belong to your family—we are God's poor; give us a share in your alms." Almost upon the verge of tears she pulled out a handful of pennies and threw them on the snow, when, lo! the pennies turned to wheat and barley. Povarina flung handful after handful to the birds, so that the next summer that meadow bore a harvest of most splendid grain; but the farmer to whom the land belonged would not reap the sparrows' crop. To this day it is kept for the birds' use. There they find food in abundance at all seasons, and thousands of sparrows flock to it from all the country round.

It was late when Povarina got back to her own chamber. Uncle Will and her Aunt Wilhelmine had gone to bed and to sleep, weary with a whole day of vain threats and indignation. She went in by the stable door and ran up to her garret, where again the moon was shining brightly.

The child was very weary. But before she slept she wanted to take one look at the wonderful old coin at the bottom of her bag of money. It had worked so hard that she thought she ought to kiss it for Good Night. So she sat down on the black box and began to empty the bag, putting its contents on the floor beside her.

For a quarter-of-an-hour she tried to get the bag empty. The pile of pennies rose up to her knees and she was in despair. She began to think she would have to fill up the whole room without getting at her penny. In this dilemma she slowly turned the bag bottom upward. There was a terrible rush of pennies. The chamber was three parts full, but the bag was empty.

The noise woke Uncle Will. He shook his wife.

"Wife, wife!" he said, "did you hear anything?"

"No," growled his help-meet.

"That child has come in," he said. "I do believe she has been engaged in some robbery, for I heard a noise as if money was falling on the floor."

Wilhelmine at this jumped up, wide awake instantly. She lit the lamp, saying: "I always knew that child would come to no good." But she added: "I'll buy myself a new bonnet for next Sunday and a pair of good shoes."

Then both of them, half-dressed, went crawling up the garret stairs, William going first, and his wife, with the lamp, coming after him.

At the top of the steep stair-case they paused in astonishment. Three feet thick bright pennies lay over the floor. Here and there some heaps were taller than the rest, looking like waves in a sort of copper sea. In the middle, between two high heaps, slept Povarina in a streak of golden light. The weary child had dropped asleep on her way to her poor bed. She had lain quietly down and was dreaming about heaven on this couch of charity. Her arms were crossed over her breast. She held in her right hand the precious gift-penny and her quiet breathing could be distinctly heard. The moon she loved shone down on the bright coin and made a golden circle round her where she lay.

William and Wilhelmine were not the kind of people to stand long silent in astonishment. The first thing to be done was to make sure the pennies were real money. They stooped down quickly, with wide-open hands.

Now what happened next is so wonderful that I almost hesitate to tell it you. No sooner had Uncle

Will snatched up a handful of the glittering pence than they changed into bats. He opened his hands in surprise and the bats made their escape, uttering their ugly, angry cry, and striking him in the face with their long black wings. Wilhelmine, meantime, had got a family of little rats, with sharp white teeth, who bit her horribly and ran down her legs. The old woman (who had always declared she fainted away whenever she saw a rat) was nearly beside herself when she felt them in her nightgown.

So the pair stepped back, no longer so very eager to pick up the wealth so pretty to look at and so unpleasant to hold. They looked at one another. Wilhelmine was the first to recover herself. She stretched out her lean arms and took two fresh handfuls of coin. As she tightened her grasp that they might not slip from her hold, she gave a loud scream of pain and terror. For she had in reality got hold of two handfuls of needles, so sharp and so long that her fingers were stuck tight to the palms of her hands. As she stopped, William had bent down also to gather up his share of the spoil. He snatched up two handfuls, and found he had got a lot of red-hot coals, which burned him horribly.

Maddened by pain, they flung themselves upon the heaps of coin and tried to get the better of the pence by a miracle of swiftness. But those pennies were not of a kind to allow themselves to be out-witted. As fast as they were touched, they turned into grasshoppers, wriggled away as snakes, evaporated as steam, floated away as smoke. Anything seemed to suit them, but they never disappeared without burning or biting the dishonest pair.

William and Wilhelmine, wild with fear, ran about in all directions, trying to escape the horrors of this new creation. Whenever they turned, as soon as they touched anything, new bugs and reptiles sprang to life. The living tide rose higher and higher, and the bright pile that had glittered half-an-hour before in the soft moonlight, was now a black, slow-moving mass, rising and falling like fermenting liquor.

After a while not a penny remained. The entire garretful had turned into foul life and disappeared. Then Uncle Will and his wife Wilhelmine ran out of the garret, too, flinging in each other's faces a last handful of black adders.

The chamber was left free. Everything was gone but the slight form of Povarina, who lay sleeping undisturbed, smiling as she slept, and dreaming of her power of relieving others.

When Povarina woke up, however, she was troubled by a feeling of remorse. She asked herself if she had done right in relieving poverty all over the country while she had done nothing for the relief of her own uncle and aunt?

The dear child was full of pity for all kinds of suffering. A poor man was but a poor man to her, without any thought as to whether he were good or wicked. She was too young to distinguish any difference in human tears. Her mission was not, so far as she knew, either to punish or reward, but to wipe away the tears of all men. She was but ten years old, and could not reason about justice. Her heart was full of charity. Her one desire was to give away.

So, as soon as she bethought herself of her neglect, she picked up the little bag and ran off to buy with bright new ready money a farm that was for sale next to her uncle's cottage. Then she bought a pair of red-and-white oxen with skins as soft and shiny as white satin. She took care not to forget the plow, and she hired a good lad of the neighborhood to drive the oxen to the door of her uncle's cottage. Then she ran into the village and bought winter stores of all kinds, a load of vine cuttings which burn so clear and bright, sacks of the finest flour, fresh vegetables and dried provisions of all kinds. She hired three big carts and made them follow her as she went through the village, loading them up with everything she knew to be acceptable to rich farmers and their wives. It was pretty to see how the little creature spent the money of the Lord. She did not buy one useless thing, such as might have been

supposed to please the taste of such a baby, but solid comfortable furniture, pieces of linen, cloth and cotton, copper cooking vessels—everything, in short, that would be most prized by a housekeeper fifty years old.

When the three carts were quite full, she made them go behind the plow and oxen. Then she remembered how small and dilapidated was her uncle's cottage, and wished she could give him a good farm house at once upon his land, but, as that would take time, she had to content herself with sending for the masons and carpenters, and pouring out of her bag a great pile of money by the highway for the new building, which they promised to get ready as soon as possible.

She worked so fast that in an hour all was done. Uncle Will and her Aunt Wilhelmine were still asleep when the carts and the plow and the oxen stopped before their door.

Povarina loved fun, though she had had so little of it in her lifetime. She gave a last look at her purchases and then knocking loudly at the door she cried: "Uncle Will! Aunt Wilhelmine!"

The old people did not stir. Then she burst open their old shutter, crying: "Uncle Will! Aunt Wilhelmine! open the door quick and let good luck in!"

William and Wilhelmine caught the words "good luck" in their sleep, and sprang out of bed. Povarina laughed out loud when she saw them open the door, crowding each other and rubbing their eyes to see the "good luck" that was waiting for them. They had risen in such a hurry that Will had put on his wife's skirts and Wilhelmine had got his breeches like a shawl over her shoulders.

How astonished they were when they looked forth! There were two heaps of bright coin as big as haycocks right before their door. The three carts were beginning to be unloaded, too. Some of the kitchen copper things and some of the new furniture had been put down upon the snow. The air was frosty, the oxen's breath steamed upward from their nostrils, the plowshare glittered like silver in the rays of the rising sun.

The new plow-boy came forward and said to Uncle Will: "Master, where shall I put the animals? To-day is not a day for plowing, but no matter, all your new fields are already sown and you may expect a good harvest in good season."

Meanwhile the carters came up to Aunt Wilhelmine. "Good lady," they said, "here is your furniture and here are your winter supplies. Please tell us where we may unload. It will take a day to get these things under cover."

The poor old pair, dumb with surprise, knew not what to answer. They felt somewhat afraid of all this wealth, remembering their adventures only the night before. Povarina stood laughing, half-hidden behind a cart. She had never laughed so much before in her life. The old people looked so very queer, so perplexed and yet so happy.

At last she came forward.

"Good fellows," she said to the men, "bring everything into the cottage and fill all the rooms. I forgot how small it was when I bought all these things. However, the masons say they can soon get the new house done."

She said this mainly to be heard by her uncle and aunt, for she thought they would be glad to know that she was the good fairy who had brought them their good fortune.

Now, Uncle Will and his wife Wilhelmine had been talking of nothing for twenty-four hours but the whipping they were going to give Povarina when they saw her; but, when they heard her speak thus and saw the carts unloading at their door, they looked at her and burst into tears, to their own great surprise. Their hearts began to beat and lumps rose up in their old throats, for they were full of pity. All of a sudden they found out that they were really fond of Povarina. Laughing and crying, they ran up to her and kissed her, thinking of her before they did of their good fortune, and then their hearts grew light and they began to be all happy together.

A year passed and Uncle Will was the richest farmer in that part of the country. He and his wife had a beautiful new farm-house, and their fields were so many that it took a day to ride round their property. It is no such wonderful thing nowadays for a poor man to get very rich, but what was very wonderful was that, whereas they had been bad for many years, they had both grown good as suddenly as they had become very rich from being poor.

Their good luck, or some divine influence that attended it, wrought in them a complete change. They got back all their former liberality, with this great difference, that now, having been poor themselves, they could feel for the wants of others and relieve them not from mere selfish indifference, as they had once done, but in the spirit of true charity.

When Wilhelmine gave up being fond of dress and when William gave up drinking and spent all day in hard labor, I strongly suspect the big new pennies in their purse had something to do with it. These pennies had some secret virtue from their origin which worked many a charm. For the money that came out of the purse after the first day would not suffer itself to be squandered and always refused to do any good to lazy, vicious or ill-natured people. Those who had this wealth had to remember that they held it in trust. If they were not prudent and charitable, the pennies quickly took themselves away.

Uncle Will and his good wife now petted Povarina all day long. At first they tried to save her from all exertion, and did not like to hear her say she had anything to do. They wanted to make a young lady of her, with pretty white hands, good for nothing but tying bows. "Dress yourself nicely, darling," they at first used to say to her in the morning, "and don't trouble your head about anything else." But that was not the little girl's idea of happiness. "Let me work, dear aunt," she said. "Let me take charge of the housekeeping for you."

After a while her aunt began to understand this would

be really best, and she was allowed to do as she would. Then she was happy. She got up at five o'clock and attended to her domestic affairs. Not that she swept and washed as she had done when she was poor; that rough work was too trying for her strength, especially now there was such a large establishment, but she superintended all the maids and often helped in the dairy and poultry yard. She was both the richest and most useful girl in that part of the country, and everybody wondered that the only changes in her after she became rich were that her cheeks grew plump and rosy, her eyes more bright and her step more light and free. "Dear poverty," she used to say, "you taught me the use of riches!"

She used to reflect a great deal for her age, and her reflections often saddened her. As time went on she set less and less value on her bag of pennies. Her fields gave her bread, wine, oil, fruits and vegetables, her flocks gave her wool for warm clothing and meat for her table; she had everything she needed on her own lands. Her farms were all sufficient for her own wants and those of her farm laborers. The poor, too, she now assisted from her own resources. She no longer gave money, but meat, meal, fire wood, cotton and cloth. She knew by this time what poor people need, and she spared them the temptation of misspending the pence of charity. By degrees she acquired a sort of contempt for money, as something that might do more harm than good, laid up in misers' chests, or risked in modern projects of speculation.

She, therefore, kept the penny, and, as it had a hole in it, she hung it round her neck by a little chain. She did not, however, like having it hidden in her bosom, and she would have given anything to return it to its first owner. Could she have found her she would have begged her to take back her gift, too powerful to be long retained by one person, and to let her live thenceforth a happy life, working no miracles of mercy but such as are the fruits of labor, love and happiness. Do

what she would, however, she never heard again of the mysterious stranger.

One evening, passing near a church, she went in to spend a few moments in devotion. She went up toward the chancel, near which there was a little side chapel, which she loved for its "dim, religious light" and its solitude. Its stained glass windows contained much bright blue glass, which, toward sunset, threw a streak of light across the floor like the soft light of the moon. That evening, however, the chapel was lighted up by an unusual ray of sunlight which came across the nave and brought out into full light the gilded frame of a very dim old picture. Often as she had knelt on that same spot Povarina had never noticed that picture before.

She knelt down on the bare pavement, but paused a moment before praying to watch the sunlight fading in the west and lighting up the obscure picture. Then she bowed down her head and commenced her evening prayer. In it she besought God to send her some good angel to take charge of her wondrous penny.

As she was praying earnestly she suddenly looked up. The last rays of the sunlight were slowly mounting up the picture. The frame was now in shadow, but the light was on the canvas, which seemed to radiate rather than receive light, like a glory round the brows of a saint. The figures in the picture seemed to stand out from the dark wall, bathed in a flood of light, as if some seraph had just lifted up a corner of the veil which hides the courts of heaven.

The subject of the picture was the mother of our Lord holding the infant Saviour.

Povarina gazed at it, trying to remember where she had seen that sweet, sad face before. Surely Madonna in that form must have smiled upon her in her dreams! She seemed to smile upon her now, and as she gazed she heard a voice that said:

"Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven. Lay down my gift. Good angels only have

the strength to minister without pause or rest and to do good without injury to others. Be lowly, but be happy!"

Povarina heard these blessed words and knelt on in a kind of ecstasy. At last the sunlight faded from Our Lady's face and gilded frame, and it seemed to Povarina that a hand was about closing the door of heaven. Ere it did so the little chain with the strange coin slipped from her neck. The light had all died out; the vision departed. Then Povarina felt her heart more light and she thanked God.

After this she had no more troubles. She lived long and very happily. At last the angel whom she had been expecting ever since the sad days of her little girlhood summoned her to join her father and mother in heaven. And, besides them, she rejoiced to think of rejoining her good uncle and aunt, who had been called away when their time came by the same angel.

For more than one hundred years after Povarina's death there was not a single beggar to be found in that part of the country; and, though many old families there have gold and silver in their plate chests, what they value as more precious still are certain tarnished copper pennies, handed down as heirlooms from generation to generation.

Nobody who reads this amusing story by Mrs. Frank McCarthy will ever give way to despair until he is sure that it is time. Your "Brown of Nevada," reader, like poor Pillikin's, may have only stepped "around the corner," as it were. The story first appeared in *Harper's Weekly*.

BROWN OF NEVADA.

"WHO's that going into Scrimmage's?" said the senior partner of Hardscrabble & Co. to one of his general salesmen. "Isn't that Brown of Nevada?"

The general salesman jumped and opened wide his eyes, as he always did when Mr. Hardscrabble called his attention to anything, and concentrated all his energies on a pair of tweed coat-tails vanishing into the portals of the rival jobbing-house opposite.

"By gracious!" he said, "I'm afraid it *is* Brown of Nevada."

"That's the second time to-day he's gone into Scrimmage's," said Mr. Hardscrabble. "Just look up Pillikin, will you, and send him into the office."

The general salesman went in search of Pillikin, with a peculiar "misery-loves-company" expression, and found him looking piteously into the face of a Texas man who wanted his goods at ninety days, twelve per cent. lower than the cost of importation, and the privilege of sending back, at the firm's expense, some goods that he wanted to take on trial. The Texas man baited poor Pillikin to the verge of desperation, and walked out of the store with the passing remark that he'd look in again.

Even the soul of the general salesman—and as a general thing this kind of a soul is not made of wax—melted at the haggard visage of Pillikin when he told him that Mr. Hardscrabble wanted to see him in the office. Yet to save his life he couldn't help adding, as Pillikin went dejectedly to obey the summons, that Hardscrabble had just seen Brown of Nevada going

into Scrimmage's. The general salesman had so often felt this sort of an iron enter into his own soul that he couldn't help assisting to probe others.

Pillikin grew deadly pale. "Brown of Nevada," he said in a hoarse whisper—"into Scrimmage's!"

"It may be only to look around," said the general salesman, a little shocked that Pillikin took it quite so hard. "My gracious, man, you've got to be prepared for these things."

"I've had too many of them lately," said Pillikin. "I never had such luck in my life as I've had this season. Brown of Nevada is one of the men I thought I could rely upon. I've been looking for him all day."

"So you've slipped up with Brown, have you?" snarled the senior member as poor Pillikin walked into the office. "It appears to me, Pillikin, you're losing the little vim that you had last season. How long do you suppose we can stand this sort of thing? If you can't do better than this you better not come to the store at all—just draw your salary and stay at home. Are you aware that this is the busy season, the short period when we are *supposed* to sell goods? If you'll take a memorandum of this fact, it may help you a little when you see such men as Brown of Nevada going into Scrimmage's. But the fact is we can't blame Brown. He wants a live man to deal with, not a wooden one."

A hot flame leaped into the haggard face of Pillikin. "See here, Mr. Hardscrabble," he said, "if you're not satisfied, tell me so, but keep a civil tongue in your head. I don't allow any man to speak in that way to me."

"You don't, eh?" roared Mr. Hardscrabble. But Pillikin had turned upon his heel and walked out of the office, more dead than alive. The flame had died out of his cheeks and left them paler than before. His legs trembled beneath him as he walked on out of the store. The general salesman who had delivered the message from Hardscrabble remarked to another general salesman that "poor Pillikin must have caught it pretty hard; he seemed all broke up."

Poor Pillikin walked on to the ferry with his head in a whirl of disappointment, chagrin, fear and doubt. His reply to the senior member would undoubtedly lose him his situation, as they would be glad to get rid of him now that his valuable trade was falling off. If he could have held on to Brown of Nevada, all would have been well; and without Brown of Nevada what would he be worth elsewhere? How could he support his wife and children, and his wife's widowed sister and her little boy, making nine of them in all, upon any salary that he could get without the trade of Brown of Nevada? He was already in debt, and some of the bills must be settled at once; his account was overdrawn at the store. It made him shudder to think of it. The cabin of the ferry boat was stifling. In spite of the lowering clouds and piercing wind, he made his way out on the forward deck, and as he saw the black waves of the East River surging against the slimy sides of the boat, he was strongly tempted to do away with all further trouble for a party called Pillikin.

While the temptation assailed him, the chains rattled, the newsboys' cries were heard on the Brooklyn side, the boat bumped against the dock, the crowd pushed him along, and he found himself plodding his homeward way. He couldn't bear the depressing influence of the horse-cars, so he trudged along on foot, a fierce March sleet beginning to beat upon the only high hat he owned in the world. It was utterly impossible to buy another, but Pillikin didn't care. He probably wouldn't need a high hat in the menial employment he would be compelled to accept when he was kicked out of Hardscrabble & Co.'s, and had lost the trade of Brown of Nevada. When he at last reached home his fingers were so numb with cold he could hardly get the key in the door, but this didn't matter in the least. Several young and energetic parties ran to let him in; his plump, pretty little wife took his coat and kissed him; his still plumper and prettier sister-in-law took his hat and cane and kissed him; a half-dozen rosy children put up their mouths to be kissed. The dining-

room was warm and cosey; there were his chair and slippers waiting for him by the open fire; an inviting meal was wasting its unctuous odors in the halls below.

"My love," said his wife, "how late you are!"

"My dear," said his wife's sister, "we were so afraid you'd gone off with some of those horrid customers. You know you expected Brown of Nevada——"

"Jo, dear Jo—my husband, my love, my darling—what *is* the matter?"

For poor Jo Pillikin had sunk into a chair, put his head upon the table and burst into tears.

It was weak and unmanly, perhaps; but he had eaten nothing since breakfast, had been badgered and worried, and on his feet all day; the March wind had pierced to the marrow of his bones. To find all this love and cheer and comfort awaiting him, to remember how he had perilled them all in his talk with Hardscrabble, how he had been tempted to drown them all in his cowardice while upon the ferry-boat, and, above all, for his sweet sister-in-law to pelt him with the crushing name of Brown of Nevada, the author of all his misery—it was too much for poor Jo Pillikin. He wept, not as a woman whose tears console and comfort as they flow, but as a strong man weeps when the first keenness is added to the agony of despair.

Pretty Mrs. Pillikin got down on her knees, and wept on his shoulder, her sister cried upon his other shoulder, and all the little Pillikins set up a howl, none of them knowing in the least what they were crying about save poor Jo, whose tears ceased to flow when he found how contagious they were.

In the midst of all this uproar a man mounted the stoop and rung the bell; but it was Bridget's day out, and in all this noisy distress none of the Pillikins heard the bell. Pillikin had in his agitation left the door ajar, and nobody had thought to shut it. So the stranger walked into the little reception room, hoping that he would soon have an opportunity of making himself known. When all this sobbing fell upon his ear, he

was annoyed and shocked, and scarcely knew what to do. Through a crevice in the door that separated the reception from the dining room, he saw Jo Pillikin sitting by the table, his head bowed upon his hands, one pretty young woman dressed in some soft, warm, gay material sobbing on one of his shoulders, and a still younger and prettier woman dressed in black sobbing on the other shoulder, and around the room, all about the floor and the chairs, were innumerable children, all howling at the top of their lungs. Pillikin hastily dried his tears and composed his features, and began to soothe his family. He took one of the pretty women on one knee, the other on the other knee, and gave each of his ten fingers to the young brood, hushing and coaxing them into calm.

"There, there," said Jo, "don't cry any more. I'm a heartless brute to have worried you so. But I couldn't help it. I feel better now; but I never was so completely broken up in my life. I don't mind telling you that I've done a very imprudent thing. It has weighed like a mountain of lead upon my heart and conscience; but I feel more courageous now that I know you love me well enough to share the burden. But I ought to have kept my temper. A man ought to think of his family when his situation is at stake, and it was enough to make Hardscrabble lose whatever decency he ever had to see Brown of Nevada go into Scrimmage & Co.'s."

Both the women started and turned pale.

"Oh, Sue!" faltered the wife to her sister—"Brown of Nevada!"

"Oh, Kate!" gasped the young widow to the wife—"into Scrimmage & Co.'s!"

"Brown of Nevada!" they repeated together, shaking their heads mournfully.

"Yes, Brown of Nevada!" repeated Jo, also shaking his head mournfully, but feeling consoled, in spite of himself, with his family's full appreciation of the disaster that had befallen him. "This was the drop that overflowed the bitterness of my cup. Brown has al-

ways been my best card. It was a pleasure to sell to Brown. Most of these men would skin a flea for its hide. But there's nothing mean about Brown."

"There's something very mean in his going to Scrimmage's," said Mrs. Pillikin.

"I call it a very dishonorable action," said the widow.

"No," said Pillikin, "not dishonorable exactly; but I must say, if he wasn't satisfied with me, he might have bought his goods of some other concern, and not gone over to Scrimmage's right before Hardscrabble's eyes."

Here something like a distant cough was heard. They all looked around, but thought it must be one of the children.

"It was like flinging a red rag in the face of a mad bull," continued Jo. "Hardscrabble was white with rage, and didn't know what he said. I'm sorry now I allowed myself to reply as I did. But it was a bitter blow to *me* to know that Brown of Nevada, of all men in the trade, should— But I tell you there's somebody in the other room." Poor Jo turned pale again. "I'm afraid it's Brown with that bill; I told him to call around. I can't pay him now; it's impossible. But I'll have to see him, I suppose."

"No," said his sister-in-law, springing to her feet; "I'll see him. I'll tell him you're not well, that you can't see anybody."

"That's a good girl," said Pillikin, with a sigh of relief. "Say that I'll call around next week. Heaven knows when I *can* pay him now; but say that I'll call around."

The young widow went around through the hall into the reception room, and found there a young man of fine proportions and frank, pleasant countenance, who immediately began to apologize.

"I rang the bell," he said, "but nobody heard me, and finding the door ajar I took the liberty of walking in. I'm exceedingly sorry to be the cause of any trouble. If you'll first tell Mr. Pillikin that my name is Brown, he'll guess the nature of my errand."

"We all know your errand," said the widow. "My poor dear brother-in-law guessed it right away. About the first of the month there are so many people coming here upon the same errand! And I've got a splendid idea what to do with them. My brother-in-law is such a dear good fellow, he's always robbing himself to help others; he's given me a home and my little orphan boy a home, and no wonder he can't pay his bills. But I've got a piano and stool, and lots of music, and a cover that I've embroidered with my own hands, and these must be worth something considerable."

"Something *very* considerable," said the stranger, looking at the young widow earnestly.

"And I'm going to make the piano and stool and music and embroidered cover go as far as they will with my brother-in-law's bills. Now, I'll give you the first chance. Where is your bill? What is the amount?"

The young man reddened, bit his lips, smiled. "There is some mistake," he said.

"Isn't your name Brown, and haven't you come to collect a bill?"

"I have *not* come to collect a bill. My name is Brown, but I don't think it's the same Brown. There are a great many Browns. If you will tell your brother-in-law that I am Brown of Nevada——"

"Oh!" gasped the widow; and for a moment Brown of Nevada thought she was going to faint. He sprang to her side to save her from falling, but she recovered herself, and her breath and color came again. She clasped her hands and looked at the young man with her whole soul in her eyes. "Brown of Nevada!" she repeated—"Brown of Nevada! Oh, my gracious!"

"Yes, I hurried over here to correct an error that had reached your brother-in-law's ears. I didn't go into Scrimmage's to buy goods; it was only to meet a friend."

"Only to meet a friend," repeated the widow, still devouring him with her large, soft, pathetic eyes; "and you did not buy your goods at Scrimmage's?"

"Certainly not. I shall buy my goods of your brother-in-law, as I always do."

"As you always do!" repeated the widow, tears springing to her eyes, her lovely face suffused with a sort of rapture that really embarrassed Brown. "Of course! As you always do! And you are really Brown of Nevada?" And here she began to walk the floor, keeping her eyes still fastened upon the young merchant.

"I am really Brown of Nevada."

"Dear me! Isn't it wonderful—strange—perfectly splendid? You'll stay just a minute, won't you? while I go and tell Jo."

"I'll stay here any quantity of minutes;" and out glided the young widow, leaving Brown in as delicious a daze as she was herself.

"Jo, Jo," said the widow to her brother-in-law, raising his dejected head, and shaking him energetically by the shoulder; "Kate, my sister, my dear ones, prepare yourselves. Don't let it come upon you too suddenly."

"Good heavens!" cried poor Pillikin, leaping to his feet; "what has happened? What is it now?"

"It's—it's not the Mr. Brown with the bill, Jo."

"Who is it? what is it? Misfortunes never come alone. I'm prepared for anything!"

"It's—it's—oh, Jo, it's Brown of Nevada!"

"Good heavens!" said Jo, springing to the door.

"And he didn't buy his goods of Scrimmage; he went there to meet a friend, and he *will buy his goods of you*, AS HE ALWAYS DOES," said the young widow, in a crescendo that at last reached a shrill treble; but Jo was already wringing the hand of Brown.

"Apart from the fact that you have not gone back on me, Brown," said poor Pillikin, "I don't mind telling you that your presence is a reprieve from all sorts of miseries; but how the deuce did you find me out?"

"Why, one of your general salesmen over there—I forget his name—told me you and Hardscrabble had some words about my going into Scrimmage's. He said you were so cut up about it, and didn't appear to be well when you left the store, so I thought I'd take

a cab and come over. It was a pleasant night—that is, not a very pleasant night; but I hadn't anything to do —that is, I had lots of things to do, but, hang it, I wanted to come, and I am glad I did!"

"So am I, Brown—God bless you, so am I!" Then poor Pillikin, relieved of the burden of doubt and wretchedness that had oppressed him, and having there before him as his voluntary guest the representative of a worshipful amount of trade—poor Pillikin gathered together his scattered dignity and self-esteem, and began to discuss matters of business with a serene and serious enthusiasm that bespoke the happiness of the occasion.

As for Brown of Nevada, he couldn't keep his mind upon what Pillikin was saying, he was so taken up with the rustling of drapery outside.

The two little women were flying around downstairs in the kitchen, and upstairs in the dining-room. The children had their bread and milk, and were washed and put to bed; the widow flew down to the kitchen and made some little dishes, all in the twinkling of an eye, their culinary perfection consisting in the rapidity with which they were got together, and clapped upon the dumb-waiter, and hoisted to her sister in the dining-room above, who whisked them upon the table, and what with the haste and happiness and unexpectedness of it all, when they rang the bell and invited the gentlemen out to supper, there couldn't possibly be two prettier or more engaging women in the universe; and a more appetizing meal Brown of Nevada never saw nor tasted.

From pitying Jo Pillikin, he began to envy him. How hollow and cold and altogether unsatisfactory was the life of a bachelor!—particularly out in Nevada.

The March wind still roared and howled, and the March sleet yet beat upon the Pillikin window-panes, and nothing would do but Brown of Nevada must stay all night.

He knew it must be the widow's room that he slept in (as indeed it was, that little woman and her orphan boy

crowding in with the little Pillikins), and Brown of Nevada went all around, admiring the pretty knick-knacks, and worsted-work and embroidery, that was of course the work of the fair widow's hands. He went to sleep and dreamed that Pillikin was so steeped in pecuniary difficulties that the widow found that the piano and stool and music, and even the embroidered cover, were only a drop in the bucket; so in her warm generosity she threw herself in, and stood upon the piano to be raffled off by the creditors and friends of Pillikin. Brown threw double sixes every time, and had just made arrangements to have the widow and piano and stool and music and cover shipped out to Nevada with the rest of his goods when the breakfast bell rang. He awoke, and blushed to find what absurdities a man will dream, and blushed still more when the soft innocent eyes of the widow met his own over the potatoes, and the muffins, and scrambled eggs, and the multitude of good things which he found out afterward she had made with her own hands.

Her orphan boy was a nice little fellow, and would make a splendid man some day if he could be taken where there was room to grow.

But who can picture the pride of Pillikin when he walked into the store the next morning arm in arm with Brown of Nevada? Mr. Hardscrabble was just bullying one of the heads of stock, and catching a glimpse of this touching spectacle of amity between Pillikin and Brown of Nevada, he rushed forward, with tender hospitality placed an affectionate hand upon the shoulder of each, and thus lovingly linked together, the three walked down the store.

And the saying is that whatever you dream in a strange bed is sure to come true; and I shouldn't wonder if, when Brown went back to Nevada, he'd take all those things he won at that imaginary raffle—all except the piano and stool and music and embroidered cover. These the dear little widow declares she will leave to the young Pillikins.

Every reader will be inclined to accept the same explanation of the disappearance of the criminal, in the following story, which commends itself to the cynical author, Alexander Dumas the younger. It would seem that a man so miraculously saved as this redoubtable hero would be sobered and reformed for the rest of his life; but those little brain-cells, which the scientists tell us of, keep on turning out forever the same naughty prepossessions, and the repentance of the robber of Piroche was evidently not deep enough to counteract their influence.

THE ROBBER OF PIROCHE.

Do you know Piroche? No! Neither do I; therefore I will not abuse your confidence by describing it. Then descriptions are always tiresome—I prefer to leave them to the imagination of the reader. It gives him something to do, flatters him, makes him think that, if he can do so much, he can do the rest.

We all have a gallery of pictures in our minds and hearts, either of sunshine or shadow, mountain or valley, sea or plain, which will serve for any story ever written.

Thus, I will only say that at the moment when this story which I am going to tell you commenced, it was midday of the month of June, and the road we are going to travel was bordered on the left by tall reeds, on the right by the sea. It is useless to say the sky was blue, the sea brilliant, rolling in long, lapping waves, and the road hot and dusty.

I will only add, this road wound along the coast of Bretagne from Poterie to Piroche, a little village like all other villages of that period, and two peasants, father and son, mounted on two asses, were trotting along this road, very comfortably for the asses as well as the peasants.

"Shall we get there in time?" said the son.

"Yes; it is at twelve o'clock," replied the father, "and the sun now marks a quarter to eleven."

"I am anxious to see it," said the son.

"Yes, I can well believe you."

"Will he be hanged with the armor on?"

"Yes, I am told so."

"What in the d—— made him think of stealing a suit of armor?"

"It is not so difficult to think of as to——"

"To do," interrupted the son, who wished to have his share in the joke. "Was the armor very handsome?"

"Magnificent—steel inlaid with gold."

"Was he taken in the act of carrying it off?"

"Yes; you understand the armor could not be moved without a terrible clanking, and the noise woke up everybody in the château."

"Then they caught him?"

"Not at all; they were afraid."

"Naturally, people are always afraid in the presence of robbers. Without that, there would be no advantage in being a robber."

"No; but these people didn't think he was a robber."

"What then?"

"A ghost. The rascal carried the armor in front of him, holding it high above his head. It looked like a gigantic giant walking through the corridors; besides, the scamp made a hoarse, groaning noise behind it. You can imagine the fright of the servants, but, unfortunately for him, it aroused the lord of the château, who was afraid of neither the living nor the dead. He arrested the robber and handed him over to the proper justice."

"And the proper justice?" interrupted the son.

"Ordered him to be hanged in the armor he had stolen."

"Why was that clause in the judgment?"

"Because the lord of Piroche is not only a brave soldier but a man of wit and intelligence. You know everything that belongs to a hanged man becomes a talisman of good luck to those who possess it. That is why the lord of Piroche ordered him to be hanged in the

armor. After death it will be returned to him. He wanted it as a talisman in the next war."

"That was ingenious."

"Yes, I should say so."

"Come, let us make haste; I am anxious to see this hanging."

"We have plenty of time; don't fatigue our beasts, for we must return home to-night."

Thus father and son chatted, and in half-an-hour they reached Piroche.

As the father said, they were in time. (Fathers have the privilege of always being right.) There was a great crowd in the grand place, in front of the château, where the scaffold had been erected—a beautiful gibbet laced upon it of superb oak wood. To be sure, it was rather low, but then it was for a low, degraded criminal, yet sufficiently high for the rope to do its deadly work, twisting and turning in the breeze like a thread from a needle. The criminal was going to have a beautiful view in his last moments, if that would be any consolation to him, which I very much doubt. A soft, azure sky, a calm, silvery sea, on which a white sail was gliding like an angel flying toward heaven, its long white robe still touching the earth it was leaving.

Our peasants approached the scaffold as near as possible so as to see all that passed, and waited with the others, having the advantage of being mounted on their asses, where they could see better and with less fatigue. They had not long to wait. At twelve o'clock precisely the door of the château opened and the prisoner appeared, preceded by the guards of the lord of Piroche and followed by the executioner.

The robber was dressed in the armor, mounted upon an ass, his face turned to the tail of the beast and his hands bound behind him. The visor of the armor was lowered so that no one could see his face, but you can imagine he was ill at ease and a prey to very sad reflections. They brought him in sight of the gibbet. It was not a pleasant picture outlined against the blue sky.

The executioner placed his ladder to the scaffold and

the chaplain of the lord of Piroche mounted the stage and began to read the sentence of death. The prisoner never budged; one could have imagined he had played the trick of dying before hanging. They ordered him to dismount from the ass and deliver himself to the halter. He never moved a muscle.

Then the executioner took him by the elbows and lifted him to the ground. What a strong old fellow this executioner was! In the mean time the chaplain had finished reading the sentence, and, turning to the criminal, demanded:

"Have you anything to say?"

"Yes," replied the miserable wretch, in a low, stifled voice. "I beg for mercy and pardon." This seemed a good joke. The lord of Piroche shrugged his shoulders and ordered the executioner to do his work.

He tried to make the criminal ascend the ladder, which was not an easy thing to do. It is strange how these people condemned to death will make such hard work of dying. The executioner had to resort to the same means he had employed to make him descend from his ass—he took him by the arms, placed him on the third round of the ladder and pushed him up, amid the "bravos" of the crowd.

Then the executioner placed the running knot at the end of the rope round his neck, and, giving him a vigorous kick in the back, launched him into space, or rather into eternity. A great shout and shiver ran through the crowd. The condemned balanced two or three minutes at the end of the rope, kicking and twisting as it was his right to do, then hung stiff and motionless.

The crowd regarded him a few moments, the burnished armor glistening in the sun; then they broke up into little groups and departed homeward, all talking of the event.

"Ma foi," said the son of the peasant to his father, "to be hanged for carrying off the armor, when he did not get it, seems hard. What do you think?"

"I was just asking myself, if he had really carried off the armor what would they have done to him? No matter; he has been punished justly, no doubt, but it was not a pleasant thing to see."

Twenty minutes after, they entered the village of Piroche, where they expected to rest a few hours and start back late in the evening so as to reach home that night.

Next morning at peep of day two guards came out of the château to unhook the dead body and take off the armor of their lord. But they found what they least expected. There were the gibbet and the rope, but where was the body? They rubbed their eyes, thinking they must be dreaming. No, it was really true—there was no body—naturally no armor.

This was very extraordinary; the rope was neither cut nor broken, but just as it was before it received the criminal.

The guards ran to announce the astounding news to their lord of Piroche, who would not believe them. He must see the fact with his own eyes. He was such a powerful personage he was certain he would find the hanged just where he had ordered him. On reaching the scaffold he was forced to believe as the others. What had become of the dead body? The man was surely dead the evening before, hanged in the sight of the whole village.

Perhaps another robber, profiting by the darkness, had carried off the armor, but then he would have left the body, which he evidently had not done.

Perhaps some friends or relatives had given the poor wretch Christian burial; but that was improbable, as he had neither friends nor relatives; besides, people of such Christian instincts would have taken the body and left the armor. It was all so extraordinary they knew not what to believe.

The lord of Piroche was so troubled at the loss of his armor he offered a reward of ten gold pieces to the one who would bring back the criminal clothed in his

armor. No one appeared. They searched in every direction, found nothing.

Then they ran to a wise man in the city of Rennes, and placed this question before him:

"Can a man hanged by the neck until he is dead escape from the rope that strangled him?"

The wise man demanded eight days for reflection. Then he answered, "No."

Then they placed another question before him:

"Can a robber hanged for a theft committed during life steal after death?"

He answered, "Yes." They demanded how this could be. He replied: "I don't know, but it is true." Now, as he was one of the wisest men of his age, they concluded the robber was a sorcerer. Masses were said to drive away the evil spirit, who would not only avenge himself on the lord of Piroche, who had condemned him to death, but on all the people who had come to see him die. A month passed; the gibbet remained on the scaffold, gloomy, humiliated and scorned, for never had a gibbet so betrayed confidence.

The lord of Piroche continued to demand his armor from man, the church and the devil, but no one answered. He was about to resign himself to this strange event and the loss resulting therefrom, when one morning he was aroused by a great noise in the place where the scaffold was erected. He started to learn the cause of the tumult, when his chaplain entered in great excitement and cried:

"Monseigneur, do you know what has happened?"

"No, I was just going to see."

"Well, I can tell you—a miracle—a miracle from God."

"Indeed, what is it?"

"The hanged——"

"Well? what of him?"

"He is there."

"Where?"

"On the gibbet."

"Hanged?'

"Yes, my lord."

"In his armor?"

"Yes; in your armor, my lord."

"Ah, that is all right. Is he dead?"

"Stone dead, only——"

"Only what?"

"Did he have on spurs when he was hanged the first time?"

"No, of course not."

"Ah, my lord, he has on spurs now, but no helmet; that is lying at the foot of the gibbet."

"Come quick, M. Chaplain, let us go and see."

The lord of Piroche ran to the place, and found a curious, wondering crowd. Sure enough, there was the hanged, his neck securely fastened in the running noose, his body dangling from the end of the rope, dressed in the burnished armor. It was prodigious, wonderful. All cried, "A miracle!"

One said: "He had repented and returned to expiate his crime." "He has always been there," said another, "only we could not see him."

"But why has he on spurs?" asked a third.

"No doubt he was far away and wished to come back in a hurry."

"Ma foi! No need of spurs; if I had been in his place I should never have been in a hurry to come back."

Thus they laughed and chatted as they regarded the distorted features of the poor wretch. The lord of Piroche did not mean to be cheated of his armor this time, so he ordered the body to be taken down, stripped, and the armor carried into the château. This done, they re-hanged the dead body, and the crows admired it so much that in a few days there was nothing left but the clean-picked bones.

Now, where had the hanged been in his month of absence? What had he been doing? Why had he escaped and then returned to be rehanged? I will give you three reasons as they were told me.

An enchanter said that "the criminal at the moment

of dying had willed his body should disappear, should be absorbed by the mind, and as the mind was immaterial, invisible and impalpable, so the body became invisible and impalpable; but the will was not strong enough to produce an eternal absorption, therefore the body had become material and visible again." This was one version.

The theologians said that "the criminal was a prey to the most terrible remorse and, not able to endure his agony, had returned to expiate his crime." Not very plausible, still it was a Christian reason, and as good Christians we ought to accept it as far as possible.

This is the third version: Our two peasants on their return home the evening of the hanging passed by the gibbet, and heard groans, prayers and entreaties. They devoutly made the sign of the cross and asked: "Who is there?" No one answered, but the prayers and groans continued and seemed to come from the dead body hanging above their heads. Then the son took the ladder left by the executioner and climbed up to the height of the criminal and said: "Is that your groaning, my poor man?" "Yes." "Are you alive?" "Yes." "Do you repent of your crime?" "Oh, yes." "Then we are going to take you down. The evangelist commands us to help all who suffer; you are suffering, therefore we are going to help you live and repent. For God loves a repentant soul better than a suffering body."

They took him down and discovered how he had escaped death. The rope, instead of clasping his neck, had caught on the rim of the helmet and held him suspended without strangling him, and thus he had been able to breathe until these peasants rescued him. They carried him home with them on one of the asses and handed him over to the care of the wife and daughter.

He soon recovered; but he who has stolen once will steal again.

As there was nothing to steal in the house of the peasant but his ass and the daughter, the ex-hanged determined to take both; he coveted the beast and was

in love with the daughter, a fair blonde beauty of sixteen. One night he saddled the ass, put on his armor and a pair of spurs to aid his flight, and attempted to carry off the girl in her sleep. She awoke and her cries soon brought her father and brother. The robber tried to escape, but he was too late. When the young girl told of his infamous attempt, they knew he had not repented and were sorry that they had saved such a miserable scoundrel, so they determined to execute justice upon him, but far better than the lord of Piroche had done.

They bound him to the ass he had saddled, carried him back to the gibbet he had escaped from, and there hanged him until he was dead, taking good care to leave off his helmet this time, placing it at the foot of the gibbet. Then they quietly returned home.

This is the third version. I don't know why, but I imagine it is the most reasonable, and that you, like myself, will give it the preference over the other two.

As to my lord of Piroche, having such an excellent talisman of safety, he joyously departed to the next war and was the first one killed.

This is an old story, whose dénouement has become one of the proverbs and traditions of our language. The details of the plot, however, are less familiar, and nobody will be sorry to see them in print again. The origin of the tale has long been lost in the mists of antiquity;—but isn't it good?

WIDOW SIMPSON'S SPOONS.

THE parish of Bathgate, in Linlithgowshire, ought to be reckoned among the classic spots of Scotland, inasmuch as it formed part of the dowry which Robert the Bruce bestowed on his eldest daughter Margery, when she married Walter, the High Steward of Scotland, and thus became the progenitrix of the royal and unlucky house of Stuart. Lying midway between Edinburgh and Glasgow, those rival queens of the east and west, but out of the common track of traffic and travel, it has been for ages a pastoral parish of small and rather backward farms. Of late years coal has been found there; and steam and trade, which bid fair to leave the world no rustic corner, are rapidly turning it into a mining district; which nobody thought of about the time of the general peace, when Bathgate lived on its own oats and barley, wore its own hoddengray, and had but two subjects of interest—the corn market and the kirk session. Among its peaceable and industrious population there was one dame who, though neither the wealthiest nor the best born, stood, in her own esteem, above all but the laird and the minister; and her style and title was Widow Simpson. This lady valued herself—not on the farm left her by the good man who had departed this life some seven years before the commencement of our story, for its acres were few and they consisted of half-reclaimed moorland; not on her grown-up son Robin, though he was counted a likely and sensible lad; not on her own thrifty housekeeping, though it was known to be on the "tight-

screw" principle; but on the possession of a dozen silver teaspoons. Her account of them was that they had belonged to the Young Chevalier, and had been bestowed upon her grandfather in return for entertaining that claimant to the British crown on his march from Culloden—in proof of which she was accustomed to point out a half obliterated crest and the initials C. S., with which they were marked. The widow's neighbors, however, had a different tale regarding their coming into the family. It was to the effect that her grandfather, who kept a small inn somewhere in Fife, had bought them from an ill-doing laird for three gallons of Highland whiskey, and bestowed them on his grand-daughter, as the one of his family most likely to hold fast to such an important acquisition.

In the family resided, in the capacity of "help," one Nancy Campbell, a girl about nineteen, who was suspected of having taken a fancy to Robin, who reciprocated the sentiment. Nothing, however, would soften the heart of the widow as regards a match, until at last the following event occurred, and caused her to give way: About the hay-making time a distant and comparatively rich relation was expected to call and take tea one evening on his way from Linlithgow. It was not often that this superior relative honored her house with a visit, and Mrs. Simpson, determined that nothing should be wanting to his entertainment, brought out the treasured spoons early in the forenoon, with many injunctions to Nancy touching the care she should take in brightening them up. While this operation was being conducted in the kitchen, in the midst of one of those uncertain days which vary the northern June, a sudden darkening of the sky announced the approach of heavy rain. The hay was dry and ready for housing. Robin and two farm men were busy gathering it in; but the great drops began to fall while a considerable portion yet remained in the field, and, with the instinct of crop preservation, forth rushed the widow, followed by Nancy, leaving the spoons half-scoured on the kitchen table. In her rapid exit the girl had for-

gotten to latch the door. The weasel and the kite were the only depredators known about the moorland farm; but while they were all occupied in the hay-field, who should come that way but Geordy Wilson.

Well, the kitchen door was open, and Geordy stepped in. He banged the settle with his staff, he coughed, he hemmed, he saluted the cat, which sat purring on the window-seat, and at length discovered there was nobody within. Neither meal nor penny was to be expected that day; the rain was growing heavier, some of the hay must be wet, and Mrs. Simpson would return in bad humor. But two objects powerfully arrested Geordy's attention; one was the broth-pot boiling on the fire, and the other the silver spoons scattered on the table. Bending over the former, Geordy took a considerable sniff, gave the ingredients a stir with the pot-stick, and muttered, "Very thin." His proceeding with regard to the latter must remain unmentioned; but, half an hour after, when he was safely ensconced in a farm-house a mile off, and the family had been driven within doors by the increasing storm, they found everything as it had been left—the broth on the fire, the cat on the window-seat, the whiting and flannel on the table; but not a spoon was there.

"Whar's the spoons?" cried Mrs. Simpson to the entire family, who stood by the fire drying their wet garments. Nobody could tell. Nancy had left them on the table when she ran to the hay. No one had been in the house, they were certain, for nothing was disturbed. The drawer was pulled out, and the empty stocking exhibited. Every shelf, every corner, was searched, but to no purpose; the spoons had disappeared, and the state of the farm-house may be imagined. The widow ran through it like one distracted, questioning, scolding, and searching. Robin, Nancy, and the farm-men were dispatched in different directions, as soon as the rain abated, to inform the neighbors, under the supposition that some strolling beggar or gypsy might have carried off the treasure, and would attempt to dispose of it in the parish. Nobody thought of

Geordy Wilson. He had not been spied from the hayfield; his circuits were wide; his visits to any house were not frequent; and if he avoided Widow Simpson's from the day of her loss, it was believed Geordy knew that neither her temper nor her liberality would be improved by that circumstance. Lost the spoons were beyond a doubt, and the widow bade fair to lose her senses. The rich relation came at his appointed time, and had such a tea that he vowed never again to trust himself in the house of his entertainer. But the search went on; rabbits' holes were looked into for the missing silver, and active boys were bribed to turn out magpies' nests. Wells and barns in the neighborhood were explored. The criers of the three nearest parishes were employed to proclaim the loss; it was regularly advertised at kirkgate and market place; and Mrs. Simpson began to talk of getting a search-warrant for the beggar's meal-pouch. Bathgate was alarmed through all its borders concerning the spoons; but when almost a month had worn away, and nothing could be heard of them, the widow's suspicions turned from beggars, barns, and magpies, to light on poor Nancy. She had been scouring the spoons, and had left the house last; silver could not leave the table without hands. It was true that Nancy had always borne an unquestioned character; but such spoons were not to be met with every day, and Mrs. Simpson was determined to have them back in her stocking. After sundry hints of increasing breadth to Robin, who could not help thinking his mother was losing her judgment, she, one day, plumped the charge, to the utter astonishment and dismay of the poor girl, whose anxiety in the search had been inferior only to her own. Though poor and an orphan, Nancy had some honest pride; she immediately turned out the whole contents of her kist (box), unstrung her pocket in Mrs. Simpson's presence, and ran with tears in her eyes to tell the minister.

As was then common in the country parishes of Scotland, difficulties and disputes which might have employed the writers and puzzled the magistrates were

referred to his arbitration, and thus lawsuits or scandal prevented. The minister had heard, as who in Bathgate had not? of Mrs. Simpson's loss. Like the rest of the parish, he thought it rather strange; but Nancy Campbell was one of the most serious and exemplary girls in his congregation, and he could not believe that the charge preferred against her was true. Yet the peculiarities of the case demanded investigation. With some difficulty the minister persuaded Nancy to return to her mistress, bearing a message to the effect that he and two of his elders who happened to reside in the neighborhood would come over the following evening, hear what could be said on both sides, and, if possible, clear up the mystery. The widow was well pleased to have the minister and his elders come to inquire after her spoons. She put on her best *mutch*—that is to say, cap—prepared her best speeches, and enlisted some of the most serious and reliable of her neighbors to assist in the investigation.

Early in the evening of the following day—when the summer sun was wearing low and the field-work was over—they were all assembled in the clean-scoured kitchen, the minister, elders, and neighbors, soberly listening to Mrs. Simpson's testimony touching her lost silver, Nancy, Robin, and the farm-men sitting by until their turn came; when the door, which had been left half open to admit the breeze—for the evening was sultry—was quietly pushed aside, and in slid Geordy Wilson, with his usual accompaniments of staff and wallet.

"There's nae room for ye here, Geordy," said the widow; "we're on weighty business."

"Weel, mem," said Geordy, turning to depart, "it's of nae consequence. I only came to speak about your spoons."

"Hae ye heard o' them?" cried Mrs. Simpson, bouncing from her seat.

"I couldna miss beein' blessed wi' the precious gift o' hearin'; and, what's better, I saw them," said Geordy.

"Saw them, Geordy? Whar are they? and here's a

whole shillin' for ye;" and Mrs. Simpson's purse, or rather an old glove used for that purpose, was instantly produced.

"Weel," said Geordy, "I slipped in ae day, and seein' the siller unguarded, I thought some ill-guided body might covet it, and jist laid it by, I may say, amang the leaves o' that Bible, thinkin' you would be sure to see the spoons when you went to read."

Before Geordy had finished his revelation, Nancy Campbell had brought down the proudly-displayed but never-opened Bible, and interspersed between its leaves lay the dozen of long-sought spoons.

The minister of Bathgate could scarcely command his gravity while admonishing Geordy on the trouble and vexation his trick had caused. The assembled neighbors laughed outright when the daft man, pocketing the widow's shilling, which he had clutched in the early part of his discourse, assured them all that he kenned Mrs. Simpson read her Bible sa often the spoons would be certain to turn up. Geordy got many a basin of broth and many a luncheon of bread-and-cheese on account of that transaction, with which he amused all the firesides of the parish. Mrs. Simpson was struck dumb even from scolding. The discovery put an end to her ostentatious professions, and, it may be hoped, turned her attention more to practice. By way of making amends for her unjust imputations on Nancy Campbell, she consented to receive her as a daughter-in-law within the same year; and it is said there was peace ever after in the farm-house; but the good people of Bathgate, when discussing a character of more pretence than performance, still refer to Widow Simpson's spoons.

In real life, it is to be feared that the heedless young secretary might never have recovered his priceless book; but stranger things have happened, and such adventures make the most interesting kind of reading. The story of this one was told by Emily Frances Jenkinson.

A CARELESS LIBRARIAN.

A long room, lofty and lined with bookcases to the ceiling, whose locked and brass-grated doors permitted the eyes only to wander over the treasures they contained. Above the fireplace hung a Holbein, one of those eminent statesmen of his own times that great master made to live on canvas. By the blazing fire stood Harold Warburton, a letter in his hand and a cloud of doubt on his countenance. "I'll do it and chance the risk!" he exclaimed to himself, as he flung the letter on the littered writing table, walked resolutely across the room, and unlocked the case before him. It was the holy of holies; the cream of the world-famed Deira collection lay behind those fretworked bars. There was the "Book of Hours," containing two Perugimos and three Francias, valued at £6,000. There was the gospel of St. Luke, bound in a golden cover studded with precious stones, which had belonged to some nuns of Ireland in the tenth century. There were manuscripts of priceless value, and printed matter from its cradle. Leaving these on one side, his hand sought the "Breviarium secundum usum Ecclesiæ Bangorensis"—the third known copy in the world! "What evil genius has put it into old Silas Frauen's head to want to see this inaccessible work?" said the irritated young man to himself. However, that was not the point. Silas Frauen said he could not finish his history of the ancient British church unless he could consult the Portifory according to the use of the church of Bangor. The only other copies of this work were one in the Vatican library, the other at Madrid.

Silas was a helpless cripple; he could journey to neither the one or the other—not even to this copy which Harold Warburton is now turning and twisting in his nervous hands. How much might hang on his power of gratifying the old Welshman's whim! It would do no harm to any one. If only his employer had been on the spot! He would be willing—nay, more than willing—to gratify the anxious scholar's desire, and by so doing effectually aid his protégé's secret hopes and wishes. But, alas! as usual, Lord Deira is anywhere but in his beautiful place, nor has his librarian the faintest idea on what spot of Europe the sole of his foot is resting. Undisturbed year after year—save for a meteor-like apparition, just for a night or a week, on the part of their owner—live the books in their cases. The Vandykes look sadly at one another from wall to wall. Sir Peter Lely's duchesses twist their white throats and show off their pearls to empty space. Nell Gwyn and Prince Rupert stare at each other as if they would like to make some remark if they only knew how to begin. Outside, the same stillness prevails. The lakes—there are three, connected one with another and covered with water fowl—look as if the very pike in them thought twice about leaping. The gigantic cedars throw their shadows unbroken in the silent water. The "hush" as you wander through miles of timber—some of it believed to be primeval—is positively oppressive.

No! Whatever Warburton does he must do at his own peril, without leave or license. This is what Brenda Frauen writes:

DEAREST HAROLD:—I have not dared to tell Uncle Silas yet. He was annoyed at my having staid out so long the other morning, and I found him waiting with a mass of copy ready for me, when I got in. I dread to think of what he will say to our engagement. And now a fresh complication about his present work has arisen; he declares it is impossible for him to proceed with it unless he can get at a very rare and ancient book called "Portiforium seu Breviarium secundum usum Ecclesiæ Bangorensis," printed in 1513, and con-

sult it. This seems an impossibility. I almost think you had better come and tell him about us yourself, and perhaps you could then suggest some way out of this difficulty. Yours ever,

BRENDA FRAUEN.

Now Harold Warburton would find it much easier to say to Silas Frauen, "I want to marry your niece, who is a lady and your heiress. I—who am only the son of one of Lord Deira's tenants! True, they have been 200 years on the estate, and, thanks to my master, besides mere book learning, I have had the liberal education given by intimate intercourse with a superior of singular culture and refinement," if only he could, at the same moment, be the good genius producing the longed for Bangor Breviary.

"I will not let it out of my sight for an instant, I will make the extracts he wants, and, the moment that is done, I will return by the first train and replace it."

The 3:10 express that afternoon from Pebsham to Euston numbered among its passengers the librarian, and, in a parcel—for, said he, "It shall not leave my hand"—the precious and much-desired volume.

It was in November, and the evenings were dark and cold. Harold lay back in his seat, and built castle after castle in the future as the train rushed rapidly on. Fancy is a wonderful magician, and, in his thoughts, hard unbending facts took the forms of delicious undefined pictures, in which the lights got considerably the best of the shadows. Arrived at his destination, he stepped joyously on to the platform, seized his bag in one hand, clutching the precious parcel firmly with the other, and started for a small hotel in the neighborhood of Russell Square, where it was his habit to put up when business or pleasure brought him to town. "I will order a bed, have some dinner, and then go round and surprise old Silas." Lost in thought, Harold, as he turned into the main thoroughfare, was recalled to passing events by a cab coming to grief just in front of him. It was a regular smash, for a dray, following at a smart pace, could not pull up in time to avoid a col-

lision. In a moment Warburton rushed to drag its occupant from the hansom. The usual crowd collected, the usual compliments passed between the cabman and the drayman. No one, however, was much the worse, save the poor cab horse, whose bleeding knees engrossed the attention of Warburton. Having done all in his power to help the poor beast, he passed on, and had gone some little way before he became conscious that he was carrying only his bag; the parcel, the treasure, the foundation stone of the entire castle, was gone! And,—awful thought that rushed like lightning through his brain, he, Harold Warburton, would be branded as a thief! He could hear the tale being told—how the trusted librarian, profiting by the blind confidence of his benefactor, had deliberately robbed him of his most prized possession. What a fearful situation! He retraced his steps, peering eagerly about him to the place of the accident, where doubtless, he had either let the book fall from his hand or mechanically put it into his outer pocket, from which it had been abstracted. He felt there; its contents were gone. Clearly the pocket had been picked. Whether the book had been stolen or he had dropped it, the Breviary was gone, and the dreadful fact of its loss remained to face him! What step could be taken toward its recovery? He could not advertise without proclaiming his seeming guilt to the world. He would go to Scotland Yard the first thing in the morning, in the faint hope that honesty and ignorance, combined with the hope of reward, might have induced the finder, supposing it had not been stolen, to take it there. Back at his hotel he sat staring at the untouched food—no going to Russell Square that night—he could not face the old man with this dreadful secret locked in his heavy heart.

After he had done all he dared in vague communications to the police, the next morning found him and Brenda pacing a walk in Kensington Gardens; a line from him had summoned her to hear the dismal news. She was a brave girl, but what could even courage avail under such a dreadful calamity! "Go back at

once to Brynbella Heights," was her instantaneous decision; "for if, by some unforeseen chance, Lord Deira were to return during your absence and miss the book, it would make matters doubly bad."

A carefully worded advertisement was composed by the pair to appear in the papers, and with aching hearts they parted.

Six dreadful weeks elapsed, during which life to Warburton was a burden too heavy to be borne. The light-hearted librarian had changed into a nervous, morose, miserable man. He sometimes felt, as he sat gazing at the empty space in the book shelf, that, like Cain, his guilt must be visibly branded upon him. He shunned the very servants, who thought "Mr. Warburton was grown mighty high!" except the housemaid, who was sure "'e'd something on 'is mind!" Brenda's misery was as great as his own. Meanwhile Lord Deira was not so far off as they supposed. He arrived in London just at this juncture. "Harold will be surprised at my return; I will telegraph just before I go down," said he.

London had a strange fascination for this lonely man. Whether the passers-by, to whom he need not speak, were company, I know not, but so it was, and several days elapsed and still found him mooning about the dark, deserted streets, and shivering in his lonely, spacious home. One morning he was loitering through Soho, and stopped to glance at the contents of a small and shabby book stall. A lady was employed in a similar manner; idleness made him unconsciously remark her—a slight, tall girl, with anxious gray eyes, and pale, golden hair. Suddenly a sharp exclamation, almost a cry, of delight and amazement broke from her lips as she seized a small, poor-looking volume, peered eagerly into its pages, and then hurriedly asked its price of the stall-keeper.

The old man took the book and turned it over carefully. "Well Miss, I'll take ten shillings: it's been lying here some time, I believe, and no one has taken a fancy to it." Quick as lightning the girl held the coin

out to the speaker, and, almost snatching the volume from his hand, walked hastily away. The episode interested the idle spectator—a pretty face, an old book, and evident agitation on the part of the girl. "A romance in a nutshell!" quoth his lordship to himself. He lingered a few moments by the stall, and asked the man the name of the volume he had just sold. Conning over a dirty list of his wares, he held it toward Lord Deira, his grimy thumbnail pressed against "Portiforium seu Breviarium secundum usum Ecclesiæ Bangorensis." Refusing almost to credit his eyesight, he asked:

"Where did you get that book?"

"It was on the stall, sir, when I bought the business, and that's a week ago. I hardly know the books yet," replied the man.

"Do you know the lady who bought it?"

"Never saw her before, sir."

So no clue was to be obtained here. But what was he doing, losing time thus? He must follow her. It was, it must be, a dreadful nightmare! Ringing in his ears was a voice saying, "There are but three copies in the world! One in the Vatican, one at Madrid, and your own."

Happily the street was empty, and the girl had gone very slowly, so absorbed was she in looking at her purchase. "I will keep behind her and see where she goes; I cannot stop her and question her in the street." On they walked. She stopped at a telegraph office and sent a message, and, finally, she turned into Russell Square and let herself with a latch key into No. 102. "So she lives there?" said Lord Deira to himself, as he turned away and made for the nearest stationer's, where he consulted the red book and entered the name of Silas Frauen, 102 Russell Square, in his pocketbook. Now to reach Brynbella Heights, and see if this horrible suspicion was false or true! As he sped toward his magnificent home very bitter thoughts filled his heart. "Was it possible that the lad he had taken to himself, the only creature he had ever sought to bind

to him by ties both of love and gratitude, could have played him so false, have deceived him so basely? If so, was this the only theft? How many more of his priceless volumes had gone the same road? What could have so demoralized the young fellow?"

Lord Deira's heart never beat faster than it did when the fly in which he had driven from the station (for he had sent no word of his advent) drew up at his own hall door. No abode of the dead could have looked more gloomy or deserted; every shutter shut and every blind drawn down; no cheerful light to be seen welcoming the returning traveler. Nor was any alacrity shown to give him admittance by the inmates of this "Moated Grange." Three times had the bell been set pealing before advancing footsteps were heard, and the heavy doors were unbarred by a frightened-looking maid, supported by a small boy behind her. "My Lord!" escaped from her lips in wild astonishment, while the boy, after a stare of amazement, fled below stairs to give the alarm. By this time, however, the housekeeper had appeared on the scene, a profusion of apologies mingling with her surprise.

"Where is everybody, Mrs. Meesum?" asked her master.

"They have all gone, milord—never, of course, expecting we should see your lordship to-night—to a servants' ball at Bulstrode house. Being so near, Mr. Pilgrim thought they would just look in."

Mrs. Meesum evidently considered she ought to apologize for any of the Deira household consorting with those of Sir Hamper Hammer's establishment, this worthy person being a contractor of much wealth but little breeding, who had squatted down and built himself a residence resembling a hydropathic establishment, exactly opposite one of the entrances to Brynbella Heights.

"It is of no consequence, Mrs. Meesum; have lights taken to the library, and—where is Mr. Warburton?"

"Mr. Warburton was here this morning, milord, but

a telegram came for him about 2 o'clock, and he went away directly."

"In—deed!" quoth his master, whose last lingering hopes died away as he slowly walked to the back room. He waited till he had got rid of the servants, and then went straight to the bookcase. No need of a key to unlock the door—through the brazen bars the empty place of the Bangor Breviary stared him in the face! He knew it would be so, yet the certainty came upon him with cruel force. Harold was a thief—the girl his accomplice. Yet why in the name of all that was wonderful did Warburton steal—ah, the ugly word was out! —such a book, only to let it be selling for ten shillings on a moldy book stall? What should he do? Wait quietly where he was and see what happened, or go up to town the next day and confront the pair in Russell Square? The night brings counsel. He would do nothing till the morning.

A restless night had done but little to assist Lord Deira as to his course of action. It appeared Harold had only taken a handbag with him, so he clearly did not intend to be long away: he would probably return in the course of the day. Meantime, the news of the master's arrival brought him occupation in the shape of obsequious bailiffs, keepers, and such like folks, all equally anxious to report their own deeds of virtue if they did not dwell on the shortcomings of their fellows. Lord Deira at all times detested this kind of thing, and only his habitual good breeding—and nowhere is this quality more conspicuous, either by its presence or its absence, than in the demeanor of the superior to the inferior—enabled him to listen and reply with tolerable patience to these long-winded worthies. Time passed on, and he decided to pass another night where he was.

It was well he did so. Dinner was over, and he was sitting over the fire, in company with a cigarette, a French novel in his hand, when the door opened and the missing librarian walked in. He came toward his master with outstretched hand, a glad smile of wel-

come lighting up his face; no craven look of fear or contrite blush of shame clouded his open countenance. But no answering smile met his, no hand took his in friendly grasp. With an icy bow Lord Deira glued him to the spot he stood on, while he said, "I regret to say, Mr. Warburton, that before there can be any interchange of cordialities between us I must ask you for an explanation of the fact that one of the most valuable books in my library is missing."

Silence reigned for some moments between the two men; then Harold, with an accent of pain in his voice, and placing a small parcel on the table between them, replied:

"Here, my lord, is the missing book; and I have to express my deep regret that circumstances did not permit of its being replaced before your return."

"I, on the contrary, am rejoiced that 'circumstances,' as you are pleased to call them, did so intervene," rejoined Lord Deira; "for it is well I should know the risk my library runs during my absence."

A hot flush overspread the young man's face. "I acknowledge, my lord, that this book has run very great risks, and that I suffered the deepest anxiety on its account; and, for these risks, I express to you my sincere regrets."

Taking no notice of the apology, his master, with a sneer, demanded:

"Pray, are any more of the Deira collection to be picked up for ten shillings at a street book stall, Mr. Warburton?"

Harold staggered back with astonishment.

"You seem surprised," continued Lord Deira. "You no doubt will be more surprised to hear that I was standing beside your accomplice when she made the said purchase."

"My lord, you have no right to speak in such a manner of that young lady! My fault in taking the book up to London was great, but if you had taken the trouble before condemning me so harshly to listen to the motives that induced me to commit so rash an act,

you would, I believe, admit there was a good excuse for my conduct."

"There can be no justification for such a breach of trust," fell from Lord Deira's lips in icy accents. A torrent of words seemed about to break from the librarian, but he checked himself, and taking the book in his hand, tore off the wrapping of paper, and handing it to his master, requested him to see that it was intact. Lord Deira glanced at the volume, while he said, "I am waiting, Mr. Warburton, to hear what reasons you have to give for your conduct."

"None, my lord! or, rather, none that could possibly interest you. You see that your book is safe and uninjured; and here" (opening an iron safe at his side) "are the keys, so that you may satisfy yourself that your library has not suffered at my hands. If you have anything further to say to me, I shall be leaving early tomorrow morning. I am well aware of all that I owe you, but you have canceled my debt by regarding me as a common thief." After a moment's pause the librarian, with a slight bow, turned on his heel and left the room.

The solitary man sat on by the dying fire, anger and regret struggling together in his heart, while Harold Warburton prepared to shake the dust of Brynbella Heights from his feet by packing his clothes.

It was with a sad heart he found himself the following day in town. He had quitted what had so long been his home without seeing his employer again; a servant, as he was starting, brought him a sealed envelope containing a check with the amount of salary due to him. How gladly he would have exchanged it for one word of pardon and peace!

The journey upon this occasion was solaced with no agreeable forecasts for the future. Harold was now adrift on the world with a few pounds in his pocket and what little he had saved in the bank. He had no idea of going to his home in disgrace; no, he must find something to do in London, if possible, on Brenda's account; for, if anything happened to the old man,

Silas, she would be left alone in the world. There was a school friend of his, a bookseller's son, perhaps he would help him to some work. Poor Brenda! How wretched she would be! And what to say to her uncle!

"We had better tell him the truth," was Brenda's verdict the next day. "Some garbled version of the affair may reach him, so let him hear the real facts from yourself."

The old man listened to the young man's tale in silence. When it was finished, he said:

"Well, lad, you may be thankful indeed you're no worse off. It was a mad risk to run. And now you are on the world. Well, as I was concerned in your folly, I must see if I cannot help you out of its consequences."

A week later Harold had started for Florence, to make extracts in the Lorenzian Library for Brenda's uncle.

Meanwhile, Lord Deira was not enjoying himself. Brynbella Heights became odious to him; everything reminded him of his disgraced librarian. England was detestable, the climate not fit to live in, the people not fit to speak to; so once more the shutters were shut, the doors of Brynbella Heights bolted and barred, and the pictures, the pike, and the wild fowl had the place again to themselves.

Harold, established in Florence, was making himself as happy as he could by dint of hard work. Besides what he was doing for Silas Frauen, the bookseller's son had got him a commission for some notes on various art subjects. One day he was hurrying from the Uffizi to the Pitti palace, by the underground passage connecting the two. Just as the last bell for closing was ringing, a gentleman was coming rapidly from the opposite direction; they were face to face before the dim light permitted recognition. "Harold!" "Lord Deira!" was the simultaneous exclamation, and the two were shaking hands as if "Breviarium Bangorensis" had never existed.

Harold, as they walked together to Lord Deira's

hotel, was shocked to see how ill and worn his master was looking. The fact was he had felt the parting from his librarian much more than he himself had any idea of. "Now, my dear fellow, let there be an end to this mystery," said Lord Deira, as soon as the hotel was reached and they were seated over a blazing wood fire. As shortly as possible the full and true recital of the book and its story was told to the eager listener.

"Miss Brenda's *beaux yeux* have a great deal to answer for!" he said maliciously, when Harold had ended. Long into the night the reunited friends sat talking.

"Remember, Harold, no forewarning by telegram! Miss Brenda deserves a fright, and she shall have it!" were Lord Deira's parting words to him as the Paris train moved off, leaving Warburton on the platform alone, but full of hope and happiness.

Brenda Frauen was sitting at her eternal task of copying, when, the door opening, a tall, dark man followed closely on the heels of the little maid servant, and cut short her attempts to announce him by saying:

"I am Lord Deira, Miss Frauen. Harold Warburton——" He got no further.

A piteous exclamation of "Oh, surely there are no more books lost!" broke from the gray-eyed girl who stood before him, too frightened to have any conventionalities at her command.

She could not help smiling as he took her by the hand and reassured her by saying, "No; it is only a secret found out. Harold has explained to me the reason for the journey my book took, and now I see the temptress, I can quite understand the tempted. But now I must tell you all that has happened."

When Lord Deira had ended, Brenda's gray eyes were full of tears. "I cannot tell you," she said, "how Harold grieved over your doubts of him; I do not think anything could have made him really happy unless you had understood and forgiven him."

Lord Deira smiled dubiously, and went on to explain his plans for their future.

"And you really think you could be happy at Bryn-

bella Heights?" he was asking, when a bell sounded from the corner of the room.

"It is my uncle ringing; he wants me," she explained. "Will you let him know that I am here, and ask him to see me? I promised Harold I would tell him everything, and talk over matters with him."

In a few minutes Lord Deira was in Silas Frauen's own den, telling him the sequel to the romance of the Welsh Breviary.

Old Silas Frauen was not overwhelmed with surprise at the revelation of the state of affairs between Warburton and his niece; nor, when Lord Deira proceeded to say that, of course, Harold would resume his duties at Brynbella Heights, and that, in the event of his marriage, he would have an increase of salary and a home in the park to live in, did he offer any objection to the proposed schemes. "You see, Mr. Frauen, there is one special argument in favor of their marriage, and that is, no more of my books need run errands to you, for doubtless you will be on the spot to consult them at your pleasure."

* * * * * * *

Once more we see Brynbella Heights. No look of gloom there now, no shutters shut, and no doors barred. Lord Deira has followed his librarian's example, and a vivacious lady, of blood as blue as his own, now rules in those once gloomy halls. The girl with the parrot on her wrist looks pleased as she watches from her frame over the door; and the cavaliers, Nell Gwyn, and my Lady Castlemaine would like to come down and join in the gayety, for Lord and Lady Deira are giving a fancy ball.

Silas Frauen is indulging in a dissertation on the roots of the Welsh language to a Dutch Burgomaster—in every-day life Sir Hamper Hammer—to whom he might as well be talking Greek; while in Charles the Martyr and his queen, together with Mr. Esquire Inglesant and Mary Collett, who are moving slowly through the figures of the minuet, we easily recognize the librarian and his master, and their respective wives.

A piece of color as vivid as a picture made with real pigments and hung in the brightest light is this swift sketch by the gifted Guy de Maupassant, which has been translated especially for ROMANCE.

"TIMBUCTOO."

THE Boulevard, that living stream, shone resplendent in the fiery rays of the setting sun. The sky was red and blinding, while behind the Madeleine a brilliant cloud threw its golden reflections the length of the avenue. The gay, joyous crowd, moving in this flaming light, seemed to be apotheosized—their faces were gilded, their hats and coats were tinted by the crimson rays, while even their polished shoes cast golden shadows on the asphalt. Before the cafés, crowds of men were drinking from glasses that seemed to be encrusted with glowing precious stones.

In the midst of this throng of soberly dressed men, two officers, *en grande tenue*, were seated, dazzling the eyes of the multitude by the splendor of their uniforms.

Suddenly, a tall, stout negro, dressed entirely in white, with a vest covered with gold embroideries, his face shining as if waxed, passed the café with a ridiculous air of importance. He laughed incessantly,—at the crowd, at the news boys, at the brilliant sky, at all Paris. He was so tall that he towered above every one. The loungers stared at him while he stared at the two officers. Jostling and tumbling over the people in his path, he rushed forward to their table, fixing upon one of them his shining, delighted eyes, while his mouth was stretched from ear to ear, exhibiting his white teeth, which were like the moon crossing a dark sky.

The two officers gazed at the ebony giant, without understanding his emotion, or recognizing him.

In a queer voice, which made the tables ring with the laughter of the spectators, he cried, "Bon jour, mon Lieutenant!"

One of the officers was chief of battalion; the other, a colonel.

"I do not know you, sir, or what you wish of me," the senior officer answered.

The negro replied, "Moi love you much, Lieutenant Vedie,—seige of Bezi, si, si, ya."

The officer, astounded at this jargon, looked fixedly at the negro, searching his memory to the bottom. Suddenly he exclaimed, "Timbuctoo!"

The radiant negro clapped his thigh and uttered a cry which amounted in violence to a roar.

"Si, si, ya, ya! You know me,—Timbuctoo."

The commandant extended his hand, laughing with all his heart. Then Timbuctoo became very grave. He seized the hand of the officer, and before releasing it kissed it with rapture, according to Arabic and African custom. The embarrassed officer reproved him in severe tones. "Allons, allons, Timbuctoo! We are not in Africa. Sit down and tell me how I find you here."

Timbuctoo drew himself up with infinite dignity, and while stammering and stamping he answered, "Moi bon cuisinier, moi mangé, roll teaucoup, des Prussiens," —which reply was accompanied with howls of joy.

When the officer, who alone understood this strange language, had questioned him at length, he dismissed him with, "Au revoir, Timbuctoo. A bientot."

The negro arose, and contenting himself this time with a pressure of the hand, cried out, "Bon jour, ya, ya," gesticulating and laughing as he disappeared.

The amused spectators were now convinced that he was a lunatic, while the colonel demanded, "Well, who is this black brute?"

"A good soldier, and a brave one. I am going to tell you his story. It is amusing. You recall that in 1870 I was shut up in Bezieres, which the negro called Bezi. We were not besieged, but blockaded. The Prussian lines surrounded us, up to the cannon's mouth, and though they did not attack us, we were starving, little by little. I was then a lieutenant—our garrison was composed of troops of many varieties, the remains of regiments nearly annihilated, deserters, marauders,—all sorts, in fact. One evening, twelve Turks

arrived. No one knew from whence, or how they came. They presented themselves at the gate, weary, battered and hungry. The men were assigned to me, and I soon learned that they were rebels against all authority, and ignored discipline. They were always out and always drunk. I tried the police quarters, then the prison—nothing succeeded. My men would disappear for entire days, as if buried in the very earth. Then they would reappear in a condition that resembled intoxication. They had no money,—where did they drink and how?

"This state of affairs began to puzzle me intensely, especially as these poor savages amused and interested me by their eternal good spirits. They were simply big, playful children. I observed that they blindly obeyed the tall fellow, whom you have just seen. He governed them by his strong will and led them in all their mysterious enterprises as if he were their chief. Finally I ordered them before me and questioned them closely. Our interview lasted three hours, so eager was I to penetrate this singular 'charabia.' As for him, the poor devil made frantic efforts to be understood,—invented words, gesticulated, whistled, perspired, then stopped when he fancied I had caught his meaning. I discovered that he was the son of a chief, a sort of negro king, in the neighborhood of Timbuctoo. I asked him his name. He answered with something that sounded like 'Chari hari boula hali.' It seemed to me a simpler matter to give him the name of his country, and in eight days the entire garrison so called him.

"But we were still curious to know how this savage obtained his liquor. I discovered it in a singular way. On the ramparts one morning, I was studying the horizon with my glass, when I perceived in a vineyard a moving object. The harvest of the vintage was at hand. The grapes were nearly ready, but this made little impression on me. I fancied I had seen a spy approaching us through the vines, and I immediately organized an expedition to surround and seize the intruder. I took command myself, after receiving the sanction of the General. I ordered out three small companies, by

three different routes, who were to march near the suspected vineyard and surround it. In order to cut off the retreat of the spy, one company would be obliged to march an hour or more. One man left on the wall, to make observations, indicated by signs to me that the spy was still there. We marched in silence, bending double. We nearly crouched in the dust.

"Finally, we reached the spot. I advanced my soldiers, who sprang suddenly into the vineyard, to find only Timbuctoo, who was crawling on all fours, devouring the grapes, or rather lapping them as a dog would a bowl of milk, with open mouth—snapping the grapes with his teeth. I ordered him to get up. It was quite impossible, and I soon understood why he dragged himself on his hands and knees. As often as he was planted on his feet, he would fall flat on his nose. This poor, simple creature was really drunk. He was carried away on two props, laughing and gesticulating with hands and feet. This solved the mystery; my soldiers drank the grapes, and when too stupefied to move, they slept where they fell. As for Timbuctoo, his love for grapes passed all bounds. He simply lived in the vines like the thrush, which he hated like a jealous rival, constantly repeating, 'The birds eat all the grapes, the thieves!'

"One evening they came to tell me that a strange something was advancing towards us. I had not my glass and my sight was bad. Some one said it appeared to be a huge serpent, which uncoiled itself; others, that it was a funeral train, '*un convoi.*'

"I sent several men out to meet this queer caravan. I could not guess what it might be. It was this! Timbuctoo and eight of his companions bore in triumph a sort of an altar, upon which were ranged eight bleeding, grinning heads. The tenth negro led a horse, to the tail of which was tied another, and six beasts followed, secured in this same fashion. They told their story: Having gone into their beloved vineyard, these Africans had seen a detachment of Prussians approaching from the village. Instead of flying, they had con-

cealed themselves, and when the officers had dismounted from their horses for refreshments at an inn, the eleven negroes had rushed upon the Uhlans, putting them to flight, and had shot the sentinels and five of the officers.

"That day, I embraced Timbuctoo, but I observed that he walked with difficulty. I asked if he was wounded, 'Moi non—mes provisions,' he replied; and then I discovered that he fought for gain—not for glory. He collected everything of the smallest value, especially things which sparkled, and plunged them into a pocket which hung from hip to thigh. He called it his 'profonde,' and profound it was. Every day he added to his collection, stripping gold from uniforms; leather from caps; buttons; pieces of tin;—anything shining, until his 'profonde' was full to overflowing. He hoped to convey his collection to his land of the Ostrich, and had there been no 'profonde,' I verily believe he would have tried, like the ostrich, to swallow the things, piece by piece.

"When the General heard of the work of Timbuctoo, he ordered the dead soldiers to be buried in haste, in order that it might not be discovered that they had been beheaded. Next day the Prussians returned, and shot the mayor of the village with seven of his best citizens, presuming that they had been betrayed to our men. Winter came and we were desperate, harassed, starving. The negroes alone remained fat and vigorous and always ready for fight.

"Timbuctoo was growing visibly stouter. He said to me one day, 'Toi, very hungry. I have good meat,'—and he brought me an excellent *filet*. We had no beef, or sheep, mutton or goats, nor were there pigs or asses. It was now impossible to procure even horse meat. I thought of all this after devouring the *filet*. Then a horrible thought oppressed me. These negroes were born near the land of the man-eaters. Soldiers were constantly falling in the village. I questioned Timbuctoo, who did not care to reply, nor did I insist, but I refused his presents of *filet* thereafter.

"He adored me. One night the snow surprised us

at the outer posts. We were on the ground, and I looked with pity upon the poor shivering negroes, cowering under this freezing, white dust. I also suffered from cold and commenced to cough. Suddenly I felt something large and warm cover my shoulders. It was the cloak of Timbuctoo.

"I arose and handed it to him, saying, 'Keep it, poor fellow. You need it more than I.' He answered, 'No, no,—it is pour toi,' and declared that he was warm, insisting that I should keep it, until I was forced to command him to take it. He stood up, seized the cloak, and taking his sword, would have cut it in pieces, but for my accepting it.

"Eight days later, we had surrendered. A few escaped, but the majority went to the village, giving ourselves up to the conqueror. I was directed to the Place d'Armes, where we were to unite, when I found myself face to face with a negro giant dressed in white cotton, and wearing a straw hat. I was overwhelmed with amazement and surprise. It was the radiant Timbuctoo, who promenaded before a shop, with his hands in his pockets. The window was decorated with plates and glasses. I asked what he was doing here. He replied 'Moi, mangé des Prussiens, roti teaucoup. I will not run away. I good cook.'

"I shuddered with horror before this negro in white cotton, who, smiling always, took me by the arm and made me enter his shop. I saw a sign leaning against the wall awaiting our departure to be hung outside, for he was ashamed. It read thus:

Cuisine Militaire de M. Timbuctoo
Ancien Cuisinier de S. M. l'Empereur.
Artiste de Paris Prix Modérés.

"In spite of my horror and despair, I could not resist laughing,—and I left my negro to his new occupation.

"This was better than becoming a prisoner, and you observe that he has been successful. Bezieres to-day belongs to the Germans. The restaurant of Timbuctoo was the beginning of our revenge."

To the moralist the merry story of this rainbow-tinted castle is full of lessons. But who wants to be a moralist when one is reading such a beautiful tale? Surely Maurice Lefevre, who wrote it, would not require so much, though he may have had his serious thoughts when he composed it. It was translated by Isabel Smithson for the *Woman's Illustrated World.*

THE CASTLE OF CARDS.

Do you know Verlettes? It is a beautiful corner of Paradise where the sun shines continually (which is rare in Normandy) and where roses bloom without cultivation, for the sea-breeze makes everything grow. The roads are celebrated ten leagues around for their luxuriant foliage and their carpet of thick green moss. It would be impossible to say how many happy lovers, with arms intertwined, have wandered along those roads, for at Verlettes the simple people make love in the open air, with all simplicity, as Heaven teaches them to do. They can be seen in the meadows and the woods, and on the soft sands of the sea-shore where the waves roll in and break at one's feet, seeming to murmur in rhythmic cadence the eternal melody of Love. They wander too among the ruins which decorate the hill-top so coquettishly.

Ah, those ruins! They are not in the least imposing, but so pretty and gay, their crumbling sides covered with ivy, their arches and pillars gracefully draped with climbing roses. Could one but understand their language one would hear the prettiest love-tales, for if there is poetry and sentiment among the old stones, what must there have been in the sumptuous halls of the Castle!

Since you do not know Verlettes you do not know the history of its castle. It is a strange edifice, and the people call it the Castle of Cards. I will tell you why.

At that time there was laughter and mirth in France, and the Tuileries was the merriest spot on earth. The

most elegant sceptre of Europe was confided to the care of the prettiest hand in the world. That hand, that face, those shoulders ornamented with wondrous brilliancy the imperial court of the third Napoleon, where shone the Princess de M——, the Marquise de G——, the Countess de P—— and a bevy of light-hearted beauties who greeted the Empire, then in its cradle, and later dropped a tear on its tomb. People used to laugh in those days, for the future seemed rosy-hued, and who could foretell the bitterness and mourning to come? It was a time of bright eyes and sparkling wit, of wildest boasts right royally fulfilled, of foolish wagers laid in the bottom of a glass of champagne and proudly paid with princely fortunes. Ah, it was a merry round of pleasure! What about Verlettes? Wait. I am coming to it.

There was at court a charming man, a fine-looking fellow, of lordly bearing and a pair of legs to be coveted by a leader of the cotillion. He was immensely popular on account of his high spirits, his gayety, his gallantry; but among all his virtues the Duke de Lucenay had one fault; he was as fond of boasting as a Gascon cadet. According to his declarations he knew everything, had seen everything, done everything. At last, two or three stories more improbable than any he had yet related proved too much for his hearers' credulity, and they made a practice of inventing the most absurd tales merely for the purpose of hearing him exclaim, "I have seen better than that!"

Lucenay was known to be anything but a millionaire. Indeed, his promissory notes were far more plentiful than his coin; yet, in the course of conversation he was accustomed to mention, with ludicrous gravity, his forests, his hunting, his castle of Verlettes, and nearly all his stories began with, "When I was living at Verlettes," so that the name became a by-word with the merry throng at court. When a person wished to deny the existence of something, he would say laughingly: "It is as true as the castle of Verlettes."

Blissfully unconscious of the amusement he was fur-

nishing his listeners, Lucenay enlarged continually upon his recitals, and ended by deceiving himself, as, giving his imagination full play, he described in perfect good faith the towers, staircases, halls, boudoirs and galleries of the beautiful castle which no one had seen, but which in his fancy stood on the hill-top, overlooking the village, and the sea-shore where the waves broke at the foot of the rocks.

One day the Princess de M——, who was conversing with the Emperor, drew his attention to the Duke de Lucenay, then holding forth as usual to a group of listeners.

"He is off to his Castle of Verlettes again," she said. "Do you believe in it, Sire?"

"Not in the least," replied the Emperor smiling. "But it pleases him so much to think we do that it would be positively cruel for us to dispel his illusion."

"Still, if your Majesty were willing——"

Before she had time to say more, the Marquise de G—— and the Countess de P—— quitted the circle which surrounded Lucenay and, laughing heartily, approached the Emperor.

"What is it that amuses you so much?" he asked; "may we not share your enjoyment?"

"Oh, Sire," exclaimed the Marquise, making a deep courtesy, "Lucenay has been telling us the most absurd hunting tale. Really, this is too much!" "Indeed it is; it amounts to impertinence," added the Countess, and the three ladies said with one voice:

"Will you avenge us, Sire?"

"How can I do so?" he asked.

"If he owns such a handsome place, why does he not show it to any one? He ought to be forced to prove the truth of his fine descriptions," suggested one of the ladies, and the Emperor answered gayly:

"You are right. Since poor Lucenay has offended you ladies, you must be avenged. He shall show you his castle, I give you my word as surety for that."

The news spread like a train of gunpowder through the salons, and on every side were furtive smiles and

whispers. The Emperor walked with a leisurely air to where the Empress was seated, listening to the Duke's recital, and stood for a minute twisting his moustache, as was his habit, looking meanwhile at the speaker, with a mischievous twinkle in his pale eyes, under the heavy lids. Suddenly, as the narrator came to a period and paused for breath, Napoleon put in, saying:

"Lucenay, you have told so much about your Castle of Verlettes, that you have aroused the curiosity of all these ladies, and of the Empress and myself."

Eugenie looked up in surprise, but her husband acquainted her, by a side glance which was invisible to every one else, with his intention, and she, seeing also that he wished her to carry out the joke, hastened to catch the ball as he tossed it.

"Yes, indeed, Monsieur de Lucenay," she said with a radiant smile. "We are all consumed with anxiety to see Verlettes."

The Duke stopped smiling and cast a dismayed glance round him. In every one of the beautiful faces he saw mischief plainly written, as the ladies cried in chorus:

"Oh, yes, Monsieur, do take us to Verlettes!"

He was lost. What should he do; confess the truth? That would be utter ruin, he knew, for the Emperor could not endure a fool, and how was he to extricate himself gracefully from such an awkward predicament? Once a ray of hope came to him; perhaps the Emperor was in jest. But a single glance at the latter's face told that disgrace awaited him. There was nothing for him to do, therefore, but to acknowledge the fraud and submit to the consequences. It had taken him only a few seconds to make this decision, yet he had suffered as none do but those about to die, and had perhaps exercised as much courage in confronting calmly the looks of scorn that were levelled at him as soldiers do in rushing to an attack in the face of whistling bullets. Suddenly an inspiration came to him. A slight color rose in his cheeks; he drew a long breath and smiled, saying: "Is it possible, Sire, Madame, that your

Majesties mean to do me so great an honor? Indeed I do not deserve——"

"My friend, you have but to name the day and we shall be there," said Napoleon gayly, wondering how the other meant to act in the matter.

"Will you then honor me by opening the hunting season at Verlettes? It is now the 12th of June; in two months and a half——"

"With pleasure, if Madame is agreeable," replied the Emperor turning to the Empress, and then he added: "But do not inconvenience yourself, Lucenay; if you prefer to receive us sooner, let us know and I will change the date."

"Your Majesty overwhelms me, but I would not for the world cause a law of the Empire to be violated."

With these words the Duke drew himself up proudly, and then, looking round the brilliant circle, exclaimed:

"It is agreed then, ladies, the Imperial hunt is to open at Verlettes."

He kissed the hand of the Empress with great reverence, and then withdrew, and while the ladies of the court expressed in their faces their amazement at the turn the affair had taken, the Emperor said, laughing:

"I believe the Duke is cleverer than you are, ladies!"

Days and weeks passed, and the Duke de Lucenay was forgotten. He had disappeared entirely, and was, to all intents and purposes, dead and buried.

The court repaired to Compiègne, and in that charming palace fête succeeded fête. After Compiègne, it was Saint-Cloud. There seemed to be a craving for change and novelty, and time passed slowly. Under the trees of the Park ladies and cavaliers talked of the hunt, and longed for Fontainebleau, for Autumn's first tints were beginning to brighten the old chestnut trees. Wonderful tales were told of hunting-adventures, "ten-horns" killed with quail shot, swallows, with buck-shot, and so on, until suddenly the Princess de M—— exclaimed laughing:

"Truly, that is worthy of Lucenay!"

At the sound of this name a chorus of voices arose:

"Where is he?"

"What is he doing all this time?"

"What about Verlettes, and the forests?"

"Ladies," said the Emperor, slowly, "I have seen Lucenay."

"Is it possible, Sire? What did he say?"

"He came to remind me of my promise."

"Then he really has a castle?"

"He said so, and what is more, a special train will be ready on Saturday, as agreed, to take us all to Verlettes."

From that moment nothing was talked about but the anticipated visit, and in a revulsion of feeling the utmost confidence was expressed in the existence and importance of the duke's estate. At last Saturday came, and great was the excitement when it was learned that a special train was in readiness at the Imperial station. Breakfast was nearly over, and Lucenay had not appeared.

"We cannot go without him," said Madame de P——, impatiently.

"He ought to be here now, ought he not, Sire?" asked the Marquis de G——, but before the Emperor had time to reply, an usher exclaimed in a tone of solemnity:

"Monsieur, the Duke de Lucenay!"

The new-comer bowed low to their Majesties, and smiled upon the company with the utmost assurance and complacency. Louis Napoleon approached him, saying affably as he laid his hand on the Duke's shoulder:

"Bravo! You have won the game." Then he added in an undertone, "Are you ready to show your cards? I will stand by you."

"Pardon me, Sire," was the reply. "Permit me to say I do not understand you. To what game, to what cards do you refer? Your Majesty made me a promise; do you not remember? Verlettes is ready to receive you, the train awaits, and all I know is, that it is time to set out."

"As you will," returned the Emperor, drawing back. "If every one is ready to go, I am. What say you, ladies?"

"All ready, Sire!" was the eager response; preparations were quickly made, and in another half-hour the imperial party had begun the journey.

It was a lovely Autumn day. The railway train dashed along at full speed, passing all the stations. First came Mantes-la-jolie, with its fantastic landscape and its marvellous horizon, the Seine flowing between chalky cliffs; then Coreux, nestling coquettishly in the valley; Bernay, with its crystal rivulets murmuring under the willows; Lisieux, all red and smoky, with its beautiful gray cathedral and its rich pasture-lands, where the red oxen with wet nozzles and wondering eyes gazed placidly at the flying train and its long white plume, which passed by like a vision.

On the polished window-panes of the railway-carriages appeared, like delicate frescoes, white hands, rose-hued cheeks and smiling lips, from which fell the laughing musical prattle of the merriest court in the world. After a time, Brenil was reached and passed, then Blangy and its heavy green foliage, and at last the locomotive's whistle was heard, the speed slackened, and with a soft pat-a-pan, pat-a-pan the train entered the station.

"Where are we, Monsieur de Lucenay?" asked the Empress.

"At Pont Aubin, your Majesty," was the courtier's answer as he bowed. Then, rising to his feet, he added, "This is the end of the journey. Will your Majesty do me the honor of taking my arm?"

The doors were thrown open. On the platform all the employees of the road, dressed in their best, formed two lines and bowed respectfully. The station-master, wearing white pantaloons and a gold-bordered cap, seemed overwhelmed at sight of the illustrious visitors and bowed awkwardly, right and left. Behind him stood a dozen fat personages with red faces, swelling chests, black coats and jovial mien. This was the

Municipal Council, and at its head stood the Mayor himself, holding in one hand a silk hat carefully brushed the wrong way, and in the other—oh, horror!—a manuscript speech.

The imperial travellers were amazed at this unexpected sight, and as the functionary stepped forward and opened his roll of papers with an important air, Louis Napoleon said to Lucenay in a half amused, half annoyed tone:

"The deuce, my friend! You are carrying the joke too far." The Duke made no answer, and there was nothing for it but to swallow the whole of the stilted harangue. At last the sound of cheering and rapturous cries of: "Long live the Emperor! Long live the Empress!" announced that the oration was at an end; but suddenly, without the slightest warning, a flourish of trumpets burst forth, and a band of music, treacherously concealed in the baggage-room, struck up, with all its strength, the air *Queen Hortense!* Eugenie could hardly refrain from giving way to a peal of laughter, and in a suppressed tone she said:

"Monsieur de Lucenay, your vengeance is terrible!"

The Duke was imperturbable. When the last note of the music had died away, the Emperor prepared to move on, and the doors of the waiting-room being opened, the party passed through. As they reached the other side they heard the command given in a loud tone:

"Present arms!"

The fire company and a troop of militia were drawn up in line before the station.

Louis Napoleon put a good face on the matter, and giving his arm to Eugenie he exclaimed gayly:

"Come, we must drain the cup to the dregs."

A deputation of ladies now appeared and presented to the Empress an enormous bouquet tied up with ribbons; there were more speeches and more cheers, until at last the cracking of whips put an end to the ceremony, and the crowd made way for a line of barouches equipped in the latest style, and with footmen attired in the imperial livery of green and gold. A murmur

of approval arose at this delicate attention on the part of the host. The Emperor and Empress were handed into the first carriage. Lucenay, at their invitation, seated himself opposite them, and the rest of the court party being seated in their carriages, the cavalcade set off amid the enthusiastic shouts of the multitude. The members of the Municipal Council waved their hats, the ladies made deep courtesies, the church bell rang merrily, and the militia band struck up *Partant pour la Syrie.* The imperial visitors drove along an avenue which was hung with flags and banners, their Majesties bowing graciously to the rustics, who greeted them with vociferous cheers.

"Whip up the horses!" cried the Emperor to the postilions, and in a little while the crowd was far behind, and the cavalcade began the ascent of the hill which led to Verlettes. As they drove under a long arcade of giant beech trees, the conversation revived, and once freed from official ceremony, Etiquette played truant.

"From the top of the hill we shall see the castle," said Lucenay, and in a few minutes a magnificent panorama greeted the eyes of the company. The sky was brilliant with the golden tints of Autumn, the sun, which was about to set, cast a blaze of glory over the distant sea, and long shadows fell across the valley. After a few more turns of the carriage-wheels, a unanimous cry of admiration arose.

"There it is—there is the castle! Long live Verlettes! Beautiful Verlettes!"

It was a poet's dream of light, graceful architecture. With turrets, staircases, balconies all in white, blue and gold; coquettish, spruce, smiling, it looked a genuine Castle of Pleasure, well suited to the gay company who were eager for fresh delights, devoted to laughter and merriment.

The light of the setting sun played about in the arabesque designs of the balconies, dotting the gold with diamonds, and giving a faint, rosy hue to the airy walls which might have been raised by fairies in a single night.

When the carriages stopped in the spacious court-yard, a throng of retainers in the Lucenay livery were in waiting; the steps were let down, and the Duke, alighting, said in a tone of gallant deference:

"Welcome, Madame, to the Castle of Verlettes, which owes its existence to your Majesty's fancy!"

The guests entered the castle and stood spell-bound, for they found themselves in fairyland. It was a combination of the stately magnificence of the eighteenth century and the elegant luxury of the nineteenth; on the ceiling were cupids which might have been painted by a master; on the walls, the graceful forms of nymphs and goddesses; on every side were easels bearing modern water-colors, statues of marble, and a host of costly trifles just then come into fashion. The hall seemed pervaded with love, joy, merriment, and there was an air of mystery, of enchantment, which amazed while it fascinated the guests. Unquestionably, Lucenay had won the game. Verlettes had been ridiculed, doubted; and Verlettes had now its revenge, complete, startling, dazzling revenge. Exclamations of sincere admiration and delight were arousing the echoes, when a pair of large doors swung open and the butler announced in a loud voice:

"His Majesty is served!"

The dinner was a sumptuous one; the guests thought themselves in the Tuileries. The hall was hung with mirrors from ceiling to floor, which reflected the brilliant company's smiling faces and flashing jewels, while the light from numberless tapers glistened on the crystal goblets. The conversation was like the iridescent topaz-hued froth which sparkled in the long-necked champagne glasses, and a faint odor of flowers filled the air.

After the banquet, Lucenay seated himself at the grand piano and the company danced to the music of all the latest opera-bouffes, and when at last they were tired, candles were brought by a troop of servants and the guests were escorted to their sleeping rooms.

Then a curious discovery was made. Up to that time

the whole court party had remained in one apartment; now that they were separated, it was suddenly observed that every sound made in one room was heard in the adjoining rooms, the most softly-spoken word, or lightest laugh, even a sigh was distinctly audible. It was as if the walls were of paper! At first, amazement struck every one dumb, then loud peals of laughter sounded from room to room, and exclamations followed:

"What a capital idea!"

"Can it be possible? Ah, Lucenay! who'd have thought it!"

"It is made of card-board, the castle of Verlettes!"

"I shall never, never forget it!"

"It is a masterpiece!"

"The Castle of Cards, the Castle of Cards!"

The blue-and-white walls echoed the cries until the Emperor and Empress, who were lodged in a distant and more solid part of the building, wondered at the sounds. Gradually the mirth was subdued, every one retired to rest, and all slept soundly in the Castle of Cards.

This was the inspiration which had come to the Duke de Lucenay. He had been brought to bay, and at the last moment had conceived a project for paying back the giddy party in their own coin for the trap they had thought to set for him. His ancestral halls were a mere heap of ruins, a series of walls with towers and battlements, but two months' time had sufficed him to work a miracle. He had caused to be built around the ancient stone a flimsy structure of wood and plaster of ornate design, and the addition of mirrors, tapestry and furniture had completed the new Verlettes. It was a strange mixture of airy columns with foliated capitals, and solemn massive walls of the fifteenth century. The old stone towers seem to be astonished and indignant at finding themselves capped with blue and white tiles, the dormer-window looked with contempt upon the carved chimneys whose slender silhouettes pierced the sky.

Beautiful Verlettes! Dainty, dazzling upstart, it was not a mere castle, but a symbol of the time!

The next day the party set out for the hunt. Many of the guests were excellent shots, but skill was unnecessary, for the Duke de Lucenay's forests were equal to those of the famous Marquis de Carabas. Game abounded, birds and beasts of every climate and every season being found, and at the end of a few hours nearly a thousand head had been brought down. There were roebucks, deer, pheasants, hare, partridge, grouse, quail, woodcock, etc., etc. The Duke de Lucenay, it was unanimously conceded, had exaggerated neither the excellence nor the variety of his game.

The whole day was passed in merriment; fresh surprises greeted the guests at every turn, and when the carriages came to take the party to the railroad again, the host was literally carried out in triumph, amid deafening cries of "Hurrah for Lucenay! Hurrah for Verlettes!"

Servants holding torches stood in two lines all the way down the avenue of beech trees, for it was a dark, smoky night. As they drove along, the Emperor said to Lucenay, who sat opposite him as before:

"My friend, the Empress and I offer you our sincere thanks for the delightful hospitality you have extended to us."

"And our congratulations as well," added Eugenie. "I shall never forget the Castle of Verlettes. You are more than avenged for the jests and ridicule you endured, and which you have so gallantly refuted."

"I had no idea you were such a capital host and master of ceremonies," said the Emperor, to which Lucenay responded slyly:

"I often asserted the fact, but no one believed me!"

"You are a genius," cried Louis Napoleon, "and I owe you something for having doubted you. In a few days we go to Fontainebleau; I appoint you to take full charge of all the fêtes."

The Duke bowed his thanks, then turning to the Empress, said:

"Madame, in Russia they have a custom of breaking to pieces the wine-glass from which a royal guest

has drunk, so that no lips less great shall ever touch it. You have honored Verlettes with your presence, and no other guest shall ever cross its threshold. Like the Russians, I shatter my glass—look!"

Eugenie turned as he pointed and beheld a brilliant sight. Against the dark sky the castle was a sheet of flame; one could hear the crackling of wood as the pretty blue and white and gold of the walls melted away, turrets and balconies disappeared, and in a short time nothing was left of the fairy-like structure but a heap of ashes, which the sea-breeze soon dispersed. Then the old stones stood as before, but still more hoary-looking, and they seemed to rejoice sternly at being freed from the foolish masquerade dress which they had been forced to wear in their old age. It was all over in a few minutes, and as the carriages went on their way again, the Emperor remarked laughingly:

"That was a pretty sight, Lucenay, but do not forget, when you assume your new charge, that Fontainebleau is not a Castle of Cards!"

Parents who read this amusing sketch will gain a valuable hint as to the possibilities of punishment for reckless youngsters; and the youngsters themselves may learn from it what to avoid. It was written by Paul Arène, and translated for ROMANCE by Mrs. Carlton A. Kingsbury.

A SYMPHONY IN GREEN.

HEAR by what an adventure my friend Naz was dedicated to green.

Wearied with all the pastimes of school life, tired of smoking dried walnut leaves in his pipe made from a reed, and of keeping snakes in the depths of his desk, my friend Naz resolved one day to treat himself to some new emotions. Accordingly, with his cap pulled down over his eyes and his heart beating furiously, he entered—my friend Naz—the *cabaret* kept by Mother Nanon.

All the students of advanced age knew this *cabaret* well; a low door below the level of the street, a short flight of steps to descend still farther, along a narrow passage-way, and one found oneself in the hall; its ceiling of heavy timbers, its window looking out upon the Durance, and a painting of the battle of Isly hanging on the wall. Oh, joy! oh, happiness! The college only two steps away (sometimes we could even hear the clock strike), the sunlight pouring in at the window, and the sound of the Durance as it hurried noisily by.

"A glass of *eau sucré*, Mère Nanon."

"Of syrup, little one? Gum-water or *capillaire?*" (orange-flower).

"Of *capillaire*, Mère Nanon."

Mother Nanon took down a bottle of *capillaire;* with the point of a knife she dextrously took out the little cork; then turned the bottle upside down with its mouth in the neck of a carafe full of clear water. The syrup dropped slowly with a soft noise, as sand falls in an hour glass, and mixed with the water, tingeing it with little

clouds of opal and agate, and trickling down the side of the carafe in fantastic shapes.

My friend Naz, who was in funds that day, drank eight or ten glasses. Then, his head a little unsteady, he went to the billiard table to play.

I see it yet, that billiard table: a table with pockets, of the time of Louis XIV., decorated with immense heads of lions at its four corners, heads which opened their metal jaws with a noise every time that a successful shot sent a ball below. The balls, moreover, were of box-wood, the cues unmanageable and with rubber tips stuffed with list. As for the cloth, it showed darns and spots without number.

My friend Naz won whatever he wished. Why did he not stop in time? From whence comes that love of pleasure which makes man thus tempt his destiny?

Naz won constantly, game after game. He had only to play, he won. He did nothing after making his shot but pose with the cue. Even after the last game was won, he would not stop making shots, and he continued to play, the unhappy boy! He made one, two, three caromes; he made five, he made six; he made eight—ten; the balls went, came, rolled away, whirled about, then touched each other lightly, as if attracted by an invisible force; and the caromes still continued and the spectators applauded, and old Nanon herself, rattling the money in her apron-pocket, looked on and admired.

Suddenly—it was a recoil—the cue, impelled by a nervous hand, flew over the ball and missed it; the cloth cracked, it split triangularly, and the cue disappeared, almost its entire length, under the green cloth.

If a thunderbolt had fallen into the room, the shock could not have been greater. They looked at each other; Naz, the unhappy Naz, stood as if stupefied, his head thrust forward and his mouth open.

"His father!" cried old Nanon. "Some one go after his father."

The father arrived.

They expected an angry explosion, but he was cool and dignified.

"How much is the cloth worth?"

"Sixty francs, my good sir, not less than sixty francs."

"Here are sixty francs. Give me the old cloth."

They pulled off the bands and took off the cloth.

"Carry that for me," said his father placing it on the back of Naz.

What was he going to do?

The second day after, all was explained, when we saw the unhappy Naz clothed from head to foot in green; green coat, green vest, green trousers, green hat; and not apple green, not bottle green, but that ugly and particularly detestable green which is always chosen for billiard tables. Upon the right shoulder we recognized a large spot made by the oil from a lamp; and upon the left shoulder a small darn, where a rent had been made by a too vigorous stroke.

From that day my friend Naz passed a very melancholy life.

For six years his father was inflexible; for six years all his clothes were made of that inexhaustible cloth.

His companions railed at him.

The girls laughed at him.

And the unhappy Naz suffered much from all these things, for he possessed a loving heart.

They dubbed him "the green lizard." His face, on account of his unhappiness, took on a green tint. He took to drinking *absinthe*. Finally, at twenty years of age, Naz, becoming tired of life and hating all human kind, embarked alone, still in green, for the East Indies, the paradise of green parrots.

Perhaps the unknown author of the following striking piece of work, from *Blackwood's Magazine*, had no thought of making the chief motive of his story that the possession of a beautiful face unfits a human being for accomplishing great things in art. Nevertheless that is what he implies. Readers of the history of painting, music and literature will remember Raphael, Mendelssohn, Milton, Goethe, and scores of others, who disprove his position; but no doubt a weak mind is unsettled by the vanity usually accompanying great personal beauty. Most of us, however, would accept all of the good looks that we could get, and let art take its chances. Not so the more lofty-minded Burgon in the story.

ACROSS RANNOCH MOOR.

I BELIEVE it was Burgon's handsome face that first attracted me. He stood so near me at the Slade that I could not help taking stock of him, and so every day became more aware of the faultless shape of his features and the utter badness of his drawing. Being rich, friendless, and a trifle "stand-offish," he was at once invested by the other fellows with an absurd halo of mystery. He was a nihilist who had joined the class for some inscrutable and deadly object, a German prince, a lunatic; in short, anything but what he really was—the son of a well-to-do dry-salter, who had died, leaving him a handsome fortune. The only mistake Burgon *père* had made was in sending his son to be educated at Bonn without giving him the chance of keeping up home friends. He came back to his patrimony knowing no one, and was so completely isolated in his dainty suite of rooms in Jermyn street that he could not make enough of me and my visits. I liked him; so, from fellow-workers, we became close companions—but his art was lamentable!

He talked well, but it seemed an absolute impossibility for him to express himself either with brush or pencil. The failure was complete and he knew it—not only knew it, but felt it keenly; for, with all his airy nonchalance and all that seemingly reckless contempt

with which he spoke about art, he was a true poet at heart and one who reverently regarded the true function of the artist.

I believe he would have bartered his good looks and fortune for the power to give one tangible protest against the landscape painting of the day, but he could not; and it seemed as if, by some sport of chance, his handsome head had been placed on his shoulders by way of compensation. It worried him and set him at odds with the world, and the world dubbed him a cynical, conceited fellow, posing for a particular sort of sympathy, which had to be evolved on purpose.

As a matter of fact, a more loyal, unselfish, tender-hearted fellow than Burgon never breathed. But he fretted over his failures.

"I'm sick of this!" he said, one day, to me, at the Royal Academy—"sick of exhibitions, sick of London. There is not a picture here that raises a genuine emotion within you. The pity of it!"

"And, pray, what's the use of bothering about it? Round it comes every year, like a remorseless torture, and nine-tenths of the men you speak to about it persists in mistaking dexterity for genius. Let us get out of it. Let us do Rannoch Moor, as we said we would, where there is space, freedom and reality."

We had harbored a design on this big, desolate, out-of-the-way moor for many a day. Now the day had come. I, too, was sick of London, and longing to get into stretching quarters. So it happened that a week later we were in the tiny inn of King's House, with Glencoe and Glen Etive on one side of us and our dreary, limitless space of moss and water on the other.

Burgon had never been in Scotland before. He knew the romantic part of its history—its poetry and wild legends. He knew the shameful story of Glencoe and the touching old Celtic romance connected with Glen Etive, but I doubt if he could have told whether these glens were on the east or west side of Scotland; and as for the people, he had as much notion of them as he had of Laplanders.

Had he known them better and understood the spirit of their proud nationality— their independence and fierce jealousy—he might have kept his good looks and never become a painter.

At King's House the moor he had come 500 miles to see was at once forgotten in the superior attractions of the hills and Glen Etive. The wild glen, with its purple correis, brawling burns and romantic associations, fascinated him. He was crazed about it. He would people it with the sons of Uisenech, and point out triumphantly to me how the old Gaelic names of certain spots corroborated the truth of the legends. He got Celtic romance on the brain. It was a new field for the artist. We were in the midst of the veritable backgrounds, and lo! here was a living Darthula and a living Naisi in the persons of Joan, our landlord's niece, and young Angus, the forester. With red-hot enthusiasm he made friends with these two lovers, and planned innumerable pictures with them in the foreground.

There was little to be said against Burgon making studies for his Darthula, but when it had gone on for a couple of weeks, I began to have misgivings.

I saw that this same countrified Miss Joan was a true daughter of Eve—a born coquette. No seasoned young lady of Mayfair could have played off the handsome young stranger against her somewhat dour sweetheart with more skill and dexterity than she. More than once I had seen Angus scowl and tug savagely at his beard, and the more he scowled and tugged, the more saucily Miss Joan smiled and chattered nonsense to Burgon about his pictures. In these pictures, too, Burgon became more deeply buried every day—more patient in posing and drawing his heroine, and more elaborate in the details of the rain-beaten hills that were to form his background.

He had a fine time of it, and the weather was glorious. But every day the dreary moor we had come so far for the express purpose of crossing, and as yet had scarcely set a foot on, seemed to confront us with a sort of menace.

It so happened I never did cross it, for we had scarce entered upon our third week when I was hastily summoned back by the death of a relative.

Now the little comedy that was going on had been fine fun for everybody but Angus; and Angus's temper not being of the blandest, the situation soon became what politicians term "strained." Angus was a man you could neither reason with nor chaff. At first he made a sorry pretence of laughing it off. Then he sulked, and now, if flouted by Joan, would stalk off to the hillside and nurse his wrath by watching the house from the heather.

The day before I left there happened to be a stronger tiff than usual, so I followed him on to the brae, sat down by his side, lit my pipe, and discoursed to him like a brother. I flattered myself I could put matters right in a jiffy by simply pointing out, with my superior worldly experience, that the best girls were always wayward and flighty, and every one of them fond of showing off before strangers. As for Joan, everybody knew her to be as true as steel, and I could answer for my friend being the very soul of honor.

I thought this would mend the rift, but I am not sure it did not widen it.

"Any way, Mister," he replied gloomily, "it will be a very strange thing that Mr. Burgon has taken half a dozen sketches of her—aye, and more—unbeknown to me, and yet she was neffer for having the photograph taken, neffer! See you now! There she stands brazening it out with him at the door! That will be a strange thing, too, whateffer!"

"Pooh! That is just because she knows you are watching her. That's the way with them. Man alive! can't you see that if she did not care for you, she would not be taking her fun off you?"

"Fun!" he cried, scornfully; "and you think it will be right that she should be taking her fun off me before strangers. That will be what she would be doing the now. I ask you, Mister, how would you like it?"

"You must not call us strangers, Angus."

"It is the stranger that has come between us," he droned on mournfully, without heeding my words. "Neffer pefore has it happened. The gentlemen have been here to shoot and to stalk, and she neffer had a word for them. Neffer before has the stranger come between us, and now——"

All this time he had never once taken his eyes off the inn door; and just then, as Burgon and Joan disappeared inside, he stopped abruptly and strode down after them.

Joan opened the fire the moment he got into the bar parlor. Something that Angus had said to her before he took refuge on the hill was evidently rankling in her breast — for a more wilful, perverse, irritating young person than Miss Joan was then could not have been found in her Majesty's dominions. Purposely ignoring Angus's presence, she laughed and giggled and rattled on how she would dress as the real Darthula, and be taken on the mountain side with a dirk in her hand. Would Mr. Burgon not like to make another sketch of her then and there by the window with the sunlight flickering in?

What the little minx could do to irritate and drive Angus mad with jealousy she did; and when at last he interposed by saying gruffly they had had enough of picture-making, she at once resented his assumption of proprietorship by turning on him like a tigress, and saying with a fine gesture of disdain:

"Look you to yourself, Mister Maclean, and I will look to myself!"

"I've a mind to be taking you at your word, my lass!" said he, jumping up and turning pale.

"Go your way and don't 'my lass' me," she retorted, just as red as he was white.

Angus bounded out.

"Don't be a fool," said I, following him.

"The stranger has come between us, and let the stranger look at hisself;" and with this he clapped on his bonnet and marched off to Inveronan.

This was by no means the end of the rumpus. When I returned, Miss Joan was engaged tooth and nail with

her uncle—so fiercely, too, that Burgon and I beat a retreat. Half an hour later the battle finished by the cart drawing up at the door and Miss Joan, still defiant, being driven off with her box to her mother's house at Ballachulish. I was sorry the row had run to this length, but Burgon made light of it. "Never fear," he sang out cheerily, when I said good-by to him next day; "I'll pour oil on the troubled waters! Patience and gumption will do it; and what's more, my boy," he added, waving his hand toward the great horizon, "I shall walk across that moor."

And to me, as I drove off, this same moor looked more terribly dreary and inhospitable than ever.

In the course of a week came a letter. Things were just the same. He had done his level best, but could do no good with the sulky lovers. The weather, too, was on the change, so altogether he began to think he nad better make tracks for the South. A fortnight later came another, this time from Bonn. Business had called him there, and there he would likely remain for a month or more. When he got back he would let me know. We corresponded occasionally, but it was not until the spring was well advanced and Rannoch Moor had almost slipped out of my memory that I got a note asking me to dine with him that evening in Jermyn street.

If I had met Burgon in the street, I should not have known him, so hideously altered was he. From "Beauty Burgon" he had become something like Hugo's "L'Homme Qui Rit."

His features were contorted by a curious cicatrix on the cheek, which drew up one corner of his mouth into a permanent grin. The lower eyelid, too, was drawn down and averted. So transfigured was he that for a time I could only hold his hand and stare. "You shall hear all about it presently," said he, cheerily. After dinner I had it out, chapter and verse.

"We must go back to the time when I wrote you my last letter from King's House," he began. "In that I told you I had failed in making the sweethearts better-

tempered. I tried, but they shirked me. Angus was having a drinking bout at Inveronan, where he maundered on in his cups about the stranger that had come between him and his Joan. Joan was stubborn, so there we were—Angus on one side, Joan on the other, and I, the innocent cause of it all, stranded between them. As I could do no good, the best course for me was to make myself scarce. I was determined to walk across that moor, though I knew it was a long tramp and not a very lively one in dirty weather, but it had to be done and it should be done. I made my calculations, sent my luggage on to Perth, and timed it all with the greatest nicety. Well, the very evening before I started who should appear but Mr. Angus! I was glad to see the man—right glad to think he had come to his senses, and that now we should part without any bad blood between us. So much so that, as I shook hands with him, I pressed him to come across the moor with me. Not that I wanted a guide, but I thought it would tickle his vanity to be asked. So it did. There was a little hesitation, a wild look or two to the right and left; but finally he assented.

"I told you the weather was on the change. When I woke, the glens were black as night. Ominous clouds were setting on Buchaille Etive—the day looked ugly, and so did Angus. His red eyes, untended beard and restless movements told of a night's debauch. There was no drawing back, though. He was in a feverish haste to start, and before 8 o'clock we had set our faces east and begun the tramp. Before we had gone a couple of miles I felt I had made a mistake in bringing him. From the first he showed a profound contempt for the track, and before long we got into places where it was a toss-up whether we were to pitch headlong over the moss humps or stick knee-deep in the black peat mud. Once past that iron shooting lodge we used to spy out in the distance, it simply became a case of hop, skip and jump, with an occasional extra spurt to clear the numerous little burns that crossed our path. Now we would breast some height and catch

sight of those lovely little lochlets you painted, flashing at the foot of the Black Mount. Then we would suddenly descend into a sable sea of moss, with the rugged purple tops of the Cruach Range peeping over the horizon. The deeper we got into the moor, the wilder and weirder became our surroundings. No sign of life! Truly it is a wonderful place! Not till you get into the midst of it, far out of the ken of General Wade and Mr. Macadam, do you recognize its extraordinary beauty. Quite suddenly you seem to recognize the true meaning of aerial perspective; quite suddenly you are confronted with new forms—new schemes of color, and a broad dignified simplicity of broken horizontal lines, which fill you with delight and despair.

"Now all this time Angus strode on without uttering a single word. He never even vouchsafed an answer if I spoke. He simply slouched steadily ahead, taking a bee line due east regardless of any track and utterly oblivious to my presence. I noticed this suppressed excitement and began to think what a lively lookout it would be to be alone in the middle of the moor with a man suddenly clutched with the horrors of D. T. I saw he was bound to become troublesome, but the idea of his becoming dangerous never entered my head. Anyhow, the sooner we got to our journey's end the better, so I let him forge ahead, little dreaming that with every step his muddled brain was planning murder.

"I dare say you will think I ought to have known that a wild nature like Angus's could not be judged by our standard—that the passions run on swifter and more direct lines up there in Glencoe than they do here in London, and that Angus, silent and receptive, was the very sort of a man to brood over and magnify his troubles till they mastered him. Perhaps I ought to have known. Anyway, it was precisely what happened. He brooded and drank, and drank and brooded, over the loss of his Joan in that little inn at Inveronan, till he thought it was a right and proper thing to revenge himself on the stranger 'that had come between them.'

He had seen my luggage pass Inveronan, found out when and how I was going to leave, and walked over the hill to see about it. I don't believe he had any definite object in coming. He was simply impelled by the general idea of 'having it out' with me. And my unfortunate invitation, given on the spur of the moment out of pure good will, offered him an unexpected and tempting chance of carrying out his murderous vendetta in the heart of the moor.

"Even when he broke his long silence and began droning on about his fancied grievance, I had no idea he meant mischief. I chaffed him and made light of it. About the worst thing I could have done! It was adding insult to injury, and piling on fuel to his smouldering passion. As his rage increased, he got up and began to pace monotonously by the rock on which I sat taking a few moments' rest.

"'Ay!' he said, never once looking me in the face, and addressing his words to the barren space around us, 'there will be some that are so cleffer that they will be laughing at their clefferness; but the time will be coming when they will be cleffer no more, and laughing no more. Pefore the stranger came and cast his evil eye on her was there effer a word between us? Wass she effer for havering and chattering with the gentlemen like other lasses? Wass she effer for having the picture taken? Wass she effer for flouting me; me that would be knowing her since she was a wean; me, too, that would be speaking to her mother—ay, and to Breadalbane hisself—about the cottage at Corrie-na-Baa?'

"'You are talking arrant nonsense, Angus.'

"'Ay! One mister will be calling it nonsense, and another mister will be calling it fun! Fine fun to be saying soft words to her pehind my back, and misleading her with fair promises. Fine fun to be sending me to Inveronan and her to Ballachulish. She can take the steamer fine there and join the mister in London. Oh, ay! That was very cleffer, whateffer!'

"I must own to being angry as he stopped suddenly

before me and hissed out these last words without raising his eyes to mine.

"'You're a blackguard to talk like that!' said I hotly. 'If you weren't sodden with drink, you would be ashamed of yourself.'

"Then, determined to make an end of it, I shut up my book and was in the act of slipping off the rock, when he sprang on me like a cat and sent me sprawling on the ground, with the blood gushing from a big wound in my cheek.

"Half stunned, unable to raise myself and unable to speak—knowing, too, that in a second the madman's dirk would be glimmering before me—I instinctively did the very best thing I could do to save my life. When he crept around the rock to finish me off, I simply held out my hand and looked him steadily in the face. It was the first time our eyes had met, and the effect was electrical. He paused, he gasped. The murder dropped out of his eye and gave place to horror. With a cry of terror the dirk was hurled far away into the peat. He clutched his head, and finally fell on his knee and prayed.

"A strange eerie sight it was to see this big red-bearded fellow kneeling bareheaded there on the moor, praying loudly to God in his Gaelic tongue for forgiveness for the terrible act. I could not take my eyes off him. So extraordinarily picturesque was it that for a minute or two I actually forgot any pain and danger in watching him. Those few minutes made him a changed man! The crisis had cleared his brain and taken him out of himself. He saw with a shudder the awful pit he had escaped, and was quivering with remorse when he again approached me.

"He would not take my hand, but he looked me full in the face as I sputtered out my words through a mouthful of blood.

"'Angus!' said I, 'I would sooner you cut my throat here—now—than be the blackguard you hinted at!'

"'I wass mad! ay, mad! that will be what I wass! and now I will be thankful to take your hand, sir.'

"'One word more, Angus! Joan must never know you doubted her.'

"'You will be the better man, Mr. Burgon! you will be ferry much the better man than me whateffer. I wass mad, the drink wass killing my brain—but I will be for believing you the now, and I will be for thanking the good God that he has spared me the sin.'

"With this he proceeded to help me up. It was an ugly gash, but fortunately the bleeding had ceased. My shoulder had come to grief, too, in the fall, but Angus was equal to the occasion. It was not the first time by many that he had doctored a wounded man in the open. So, with my handkerchief deftly bound round my face, and his necktie round my arm by way of a sling, I managed to stagger up and prospect the situation with him.

"Curiously enough, after the blackest part of the day the mists began to lift off the face of the moor, the sunlight struggled through the thin clouds, and from a neighboring height we joyfully saw that we were near the end of the long, dreary Loch Lydon and very close to the lost track. We had come further than we thought. Angus's friend, the keeper, lived within five miles of us, so we at once determined to make for his cottage and there rest, instead of attempting to push on to Loch Rannoch. Clearer and clearer grew the day every step we took. At the end of Loch Lydon we got the last peep of our Glencoe hills. There they were, 'Shepherds and Sisters,' in cloudless blue against a saffron sky; so clear now that I could even make out my backgrounds. Henceforth the scene was to make a tragic little chapter in my life.

"We plodded on slowly, and presently came upon Loch Eaghach, where I was dimly conscious of hazy pictures of rocks, reeds, scrubby birches and poaching herons, all reflecting in the shallow water. There our way lagged through what appeared to me an interminable group of huge, detached rocks, looking for all the world like the burial ground of some Titans of old. Angus called them the 'riddlings of creation.' Then at the next turn came the welcome sight of the keeper's

cottage, and once inside it was not long before I got rid of some of my travel stains and tumbled to bed.

"What kindness could do to make up for the mishap, Angus and that good fellow, the keeper, did; but the gash in my cheek did not heal kindly, so I cunningly resolved to slip quietly across to Bonn, where I happen to have a doctor friend mighty skilful in face wounds. I went to Leith, picking up my luggage at Perth en route. My friend did not make a good job of me, as you can see. His account is that some of the nerve branches were severed, and that this, combined with the 'shock,' has led to permanent disfigurement."

"You don't seem to care much about it," said I, when he finished.

"I don't care a button! Beside, I have gained something. I have made a friend of Angus!"

"He has given you a souvenir, at all events."

"He has—you are leaning against it. Joan and he are married, and I found that red deer skin waiting for me here on my return. It is their peace offering. One of these days I shall go and see them. But now I have told you my story, I want you to look at my work."

I was fairly staggered by what he showed me, so different was it from the old, halting, incomplete and undecided stuff he used to produce. Whether it was that during that terrible half-hour on the moor some tension had been removed, and the power he had so long and earnestly striven for came to him then without effort, I don't know. Certainly, however, these sketches never would have been recognized as his. There was an independent thought about them—a free, yet deliberate method of expressing the motive. The touch was no longer meaningless; the hand worked with the brain now.

When I looked up from them to his happy, though disfigured face, I knew in a flash why he said he did not care.

Burgon was going to be a painter.

An insane man is never an agreeable travelling companion, least of all when he is a stranger and one is alone with him on a dark night, driving one knows not whither. The adventures of the hero of the following story, though their chronicler is unknown, are therefore somewhat thrilling reading.

A MIDNIGHT DRIVE.

I WAS sitting one night in the general coach-office in the town of ——, reflecting upon the mutability of human affairs, and taking a retrospective glance at those times when I held a very different position in the world, when one of the porters of the establishment entered the office, and informed the clerk that the coach, which had long been expected, was in sight, and would be at the inn in a few minutes. I believe it was the old Highflyer, but at this distance of time I cannot speak with sufficient certainty. The strange story I am about to relate occurred when stage-coaches were the usual mode of conveyance, and long before any more expeditious system of travelling had engaged the attention of mankind.

I continued to sit by the fire till the coach arrived, and then walked into the street to count the number of the passengers, and observe their appearance. I was peculiarly struck with the appearance of one gentleman, who had ridden as an outside passenger. He wore a large black cloak, deeply trimmed with crape; his head was covered with a black travelling cap, surmounted with two or three crape rosettes, and from which depended a long black tassel. The cap was drawn so far over his eyes that he had some difficulty to see his way. A black scarf was wrapped round the lower part of his face so that his countenance was completely concealed from my view. He appeared anxious to avoid observation, and hurried into the inn as fast as he could. I returned to the office and mentioned to the clerk the strange appearance of the gentleman in

question, but he was too busy to pay any attention to what I had said.

Presently a porter brought a small carpet-bag into the office and placed it upon the table.

"Whose bag is that, Timms?" inquired the clerk.

"I don't wish to be personal," replied the man, "but I think it belongs to ——," and the fellow pointed at the floor.

"You do not mean him surely?" said the clerk.

"Yes, I do, though; at any rate, if he is not the gentleman I take him for, he must be a second cousin of his, for he is the most unaccountable individual that I ever clapped my eyes on. There is not much good in him, I'll be bound."

I listened with breathless anxiety to these words. When the man had finished I said to him:

"How was the gentleman dressed?"

"In black."

"Had he a cloak on?"

"Yes."

"A travelling cap drawn over his eyes?"

"Yes."

"It's the man I saw descend from the coach," I said to the clerk.

"Where is he?" inquired the clerk.

"In the inn," replied the porter.

"Is he going to stay all night?" I inquired.

"I don't know."

"It's very odd," observed the clerk, and he put his pen behind his ear, and placed himself in front of the fire; "very odd," he repeated.

"It don't look well," said the porter; "not at all."

Some further conversation ensued upon the subject, but as it did not tend to throw any light upon the personage in question, it is unnecessary for me to relate it.

A while afterward, the clerk went into the hotel to learn, if possible, something more relative to this singular visitor. He was not absent more than a few minutes, and when he returned, his countenance, I fan-

cied, was more sedate than usual. I asked him if he had gathered any further information.

"There is nobody knows anything concerning him," he replied; "for when the servants enter the room, he always turns his back toward them. He has not spoken to a single individual since he arrived. There is a man who came by the same coach, who attends upon him, but he does not look like a servant."

"There is something extraordinary in his history, or I am much deceived."

"I am quite of your opinion," observed the clerk.

While we were conversing, some persons entered the office to take places by the mail, which was to leave early on the following morning. I hereupon departed, and entered the inn with the view of satisfying my curiosity, if possible, which was now raised to the utmost pitch. The servants, I remarked, moved about more silently than usual, and sometimes I saw two or three of them conversing together, *sotto voce*, as though they did not wish their conversation to be overheard by those around them. I knew the room that the gentleman occupied, and stealthily and unobserved stole up to it, hoping to hear or see something that might throw some light upon his character. I was not, however, gratified in either respect.

I hastened back to the office and resumed my seat by the fire. The clerk and I were still conversing upon the subject, when one of the girls came in, and informed me that I was to get a horse and gig ready immediately, to drive a gentleman a distance of fifteen or twenty miles.

"To-night!" I said in surprise.

"Immediately!"

"Why, it's already ten o'clock."

"It's the master's orders; I cannot alter them," tartly replied the girl.

This unwelcome intelligence caused me to commit a great deal of sin, for I made use of a number of imprecations and expressions which were quite superfluous and perfectly unavailing. It was not long before

I was ready to commence the journey. I chose the fastest and strongest animal in the establishment, and one that had never failed in an emergency. I lit the lamps, for the night was intensely dark, and I felt convinced that we should require them. The proprietor of the hotel gave me a paper, but told me not to read it till we had proceeded a few miles on the road, and informed me at the same time in what direction to drive. The paper, he added, would give me further instructions.

I was seated in the vehicle, busily engaged in fastening the leathern apron on the side on which I sat, in order to protect my limbs from the cold, when somebody seated himself beside me. I heard the landlord cry "Drive on;" and, without looking round, I lashed the mare into a very fast trot. Even now, while I write, I feel in some degree the trepidation which stole over me when I discovered who my companion was. I had not gone far before I was acquainted with the astounding fact. It was as though an electric shock had suddenly and unexpectedly been imparted to my frame, or as if, in a moment of perfect happiness, I had been hastily plunged into the greatest danger and distress. A benumbing chilliness ran through me, and my mouth all at once became dry and parched. Whither was I to drive? I knew not. Who and what was my companion? I was equally ignorant. It was the man dressed so fantastically whom I had seen alight from the coach, whose appearance and inexplicable conduct had alarmed the whole establishment; whose character was a matter of speculation to everybody with whom he had come in contact. This was the substance of my knowledge. For aught I knew, he might be——. But no matter. The question that most concerned me was, how was I to extricate myself from this dilemma? Which was the best course to adopt? To turn back, and declare I would not travel in such a night, with so strange a person, or to proceed on my journey? I greatly feared the consequences of the former step would be fatal to my own interests. Besides

I should be exposed to the sneer and laughter of all who knew me. No; I had started and I would proceed, whatever might be the issue of the adventure.

In a few minutes we had emerged from the town. My courage was now put to the severest test. The cheerful aspect of the streets, and the light thrown from the lamps and a few shop windows, had hitherto buoyed me up, but my energy and firmness, I felt, were beginning to desert me. The road on which we entered was not a great thoroughfare at any time, but at that late hour of the night I did not expect to meet either horseman or pedestrian to enliven the long and solitary journey. I cast my eyes before me, but could not discern a single light burning in the distance. The night was thick and unwholesome, and not a star was to be seen in the heavens. There was another matter which caused me great uneasiness. I was quite unarmed and unprepared for any attack, should my companion be disposed to take advantage of that circumstance. These things flashed across my mind, and made a more forcible impression than they might otherwise have done, from the fact of a murder having been committed in the district, only a few weeks before, under the most aggravated circumstances. An hypothesis suggested itself. Was this man the perpetrator of that deed—the wretch who was endeavoring to escape from the officers of justice, and was stigmatized with the foulest and blackest crime that man could be guilty of? Appearances were against him. Why should he invest himself in such a mystery? Why conceal his face in so unaccountable a manner? What but a man who is conscious of great guilt, of the darkest crimes, would so furtively enter an inn, and afterward steal away under the darkness of the night when no mortal eye could behold him? If he was sensible of innocence, he might have deferred the journey till the morning, and faced, with the fortitude of a man, the broad light of day and the scrutiny of his fellow-men. I say, appearances were against him, and I felt more and more convinced that, whatever his character was—what-

ever his deeds might have been—the present journey was instigated by fear and apprehension for his personal safety. But was I to be the instrument of his deliverance? was I to be put to all this inconvenience in order to favor the escape of an assassin? The thought distracted me. I vowed that it should not be so. My heart chafed and fretted at the task that had been put upon me. My blood boiled with indignation at the bare idea of being made the tool of so unhallowed a purpose. I was resolved. I ground my teeth with rage. I grasped the reins with a tighter hold. I determined to be rid of the man—nay, even to attempt to destroy him rather than have it said that I assisted in his escape. At some distance further on there was a river suitable for that purpose. When off his guard, he could in a moment be pushed into the stream; in certain places it was sufficiently deep to drown him. One circumstance perplexed me. If he escaped, he could adduce evidence against me. No matter; it would be difficult to prove that I had any intention of taking away his life. But should he be the person I conceived, he would not dare to come forward.

Hitherto we had ridden without exchanging a word. Indeed, I had only once turned my eyes upon him since we started. The truth was, I was too busy with my own thoughts—too intent upon devising some plan to liberate myself from my unparalleled situation. I now cast my eyes furtively toward him. I shuddered as I contemplated his proximity to myself. I fancied I already felt his contaminating influence. The cap, as before, was drawn over his face; the scarf muffled closely round his chin, and only sufficient space allowed for the purpose of respiration. I was most desirous of knowing who he was; indeed, had he been "the Man with the Iron Mask," so many years incarcerated in the French Bastile, he could scarcely have excited a greater curiosity.

I deemed it prudent to endeavor to draw him into conversation, thinking that he might drop some expression that would, in some measure, tend to elucidate his

history. Accordingly I said: "It's a very dark, unhealthy night, sir."

He made no reply. I thought he might not have heard me.

"A bad night for travelling!" I shouted, in a loud tone of voice.

The man remained immovable, without in the least deigning to notice my observation. He either did not wish to talk, or he was deaf. If he wished to be silent I was contented to let him remain so.

It had not occurred to me till now that I had received a paper from the landlord which would inform me whither my extraordinary companion was to be conveyed. My heart suddenly received a new impulse —it beat with hope and expectation. This document might reveal to me something more than I was led to expect; it might unravel the labyrinth in which I was entangled, and extricate me from all further difficulty. But how was I to decipher the writing? There was no other means of doing so than by stopping the vehicle and alighting and endeavoring to read it by the aid of the lamp which, I feared, would afford but a very imperfect light after all. Before I had recourse to this plan I deemed it expedient to address, once more, my taciturn companion.

"Where am I to drive you to?" I inquired in so loud a voice that the mare started off at a brisker pace, as though I had been speaking to her. I received no reply, and, without further hesitation, I drew in the reins, pulled the paper from my pocket, and alighted. I walked to the lamp, and held the paper as near to it as I could. The handwriting was not very legible, and the light afforded me was so weak that I had great difficulty to discover its meaning. The words were few and pointed. The reader will judge of my surprise when I read the following laconic sentence:

"Drive the gentleman to Grayburn Churchyard!"

I was more alarmed than ever; my limbs shook violently, and in an instant I felt the blood fly from my cheeks. What did my employer mean by imposing

such a task upon me? My fortitude in some degree returned, and I walked up to the mare and patted her on the neck.

"Poor thing—poor thing!" I said; "you have a long journey before you, and it may be a dangerous one."

I looked at my companion, but he appeared to take no notice of my actions, and seemed as indifferent as if he were a corpse. I again resumed my seat, and in part consoled myself with the prospect of being speedily rid of him in some way or other, as the river I have already alluded to was now only two or three miles distant. My thoughts now turned to the extraordinary place to which I was to drive—Grayburn Churchyard! What could the man do there at that hour of the night? Had he somebody to meet? something to see or obtain? It was incomprehensible—beyond the possibility of human divination. Was he insane? or was he bent upon an errand perfectly rational, although for the present wrapped in the most impenetrable mystery? I am at a loss for language adequate to convey a proper notion of my feelings on that occasion. He shall never arrive, I internally ejaculated, at Grayburn Churchyard; he shall never pass beyond the stream, which even now I almost heard murmuring in the distance! Heaven forgive me for harboring such intentions! But when I reflected that I might be assisting an assassin to fly from justice, I conceived I was doing perfectly right in adopting any means (no matter how bad) for the obviation of such a consummation. For aught I knew, his present intention might be to visit the grave of his victim; for now I remembered that the person who had so lately been murdered was interred in this very churchyard.

We gradually drew nearer the river. I heard its roaring with fear and trepidation. It smote my heart with awe when I pondered upon the deed I had in contemplation. I could discover, from its rushing sound, that it was much swollen, owing to the recent heavy rains. The stream, in fine weather, was seldom more than a couple of feet deep, and could be crossed without

difficulty; there, however, were places where it was considerably deeper. On the occasion in question it was more dangerous than I had ever known it. There was no bridge constructed across it at this place, and people were obliged to get through it as well as they could. Nearer and nearer we approached. The night was so dark that it was quite impossible to discern anything. I could feel the beatings of my heart against my breast, a cold clammy sweat settled upon my brow, and my mouth became so dry that I fancied that I was choking. The moment was at hand that was to put my resolution to the test. A few yards only separated us from the spot that was to terminate my journey, and, perhaps, the mortal career of my incomprehensible companion. The light of the lamps threw a dull, lurid gleam on the surface of the water. It rushed furiously past, surging and boiling as it leaped over the rocks that here and there intersected its channel. Without a moment's hesitation I urged the mare forward, and in a minute we were in the midst of the stream. It was a case of life or death! The water came down like a torrent—its tide was irresistible. There was not a moment to be lost. My own life was at stake. With the instinctive feeling of self-preservation I drove the animal swiftly through the dense body of water, and in a few seconds we had gained the opposite bank of the river. We were safe, but the opportunity of ridding myself of my companion was rendered, by the emergency of the case, unavailable.

I know not how it was, but I suddenly became actuated by a new impulse. Wretch though he was, he had entrusted his safety, his life, into my hands. There was, perhaps, still some good in the man; by enabling him to escape, I might be the instrument of his eternal salvation. He had done me no injury, and at some period of his life he might have rendered good offices to others. I pitied his situation, and determined to render him what assistance I could. I applied the whip to the mare. In a moment she seemed to be endowed with supernatural energy and swiftness. Though

he was a murderer—though he was henceforth to be driven from society as an outcast—he should not be deserted in this present emergency. On we sped; hedges, trees, houses were passed in rapid succession. Nothing impeded our way. We had a task to perform, a duty to fulfil; dangers and difficulties fled before us. A human life depended upon our exertions, and every nerve required to be strained for its preservation. On, on we hurried. My enthusiasm assumed the appearance of madness. I shouted to the mare till I was hoarse, and broke the whip in several places. Although we flew over the ground, I fancied we did not go fast enough. My body was in constant motion, as though it would give an impetus to our movements. My companion appeared conscious of my intentions, and, for the first time, evinced an interest in our progress. He drew out his handkerchief, and used it incessantly as an incentive to swiftness. Onward we fled. We were all actuated by the same motive. This concentration of energy gave force and vitality to our actions.

The night had hitherto been calm, but the rain now began to descend in torrents, and at intervals we heard distant peals of thunder. Still we progressed; we were not to be baffled, not to be deterred; we would yet defy pursuit. Large tracts of country were passed over with amazing rapidity. Objects that at one moment were at a great distance, in another were reached, and in the next left far behind. Thus we sped on—thus we seemed to annihilate space together. We were endowed with superhuman energies—hurried on by an impulse, involuntary and irresistible. My companion became violent, and appeared to think we did not travel fast enough. He rose once or twice from his seat, and attempted to take the remnant of the whip from my hand, but I resisted, and prevailed upon him to remain quiet.

How long we were occupied in this mad and daring flight I cannot even conjecture. We reached, at length, our destination; but, alas! we had no sooner done so

than the invaluable animal that had conveyed us thither dropped down dead!

My companion and I alighted. I walked up to where the poor animal lay, and was busy deploring her fate when I heard a struggle at a short distance. I turned quickly round and beheld the mysterious being with whom I had ridden so fatal a journey in the custody of two powerful-looking men.

"Ha! ha! I thought he would make for this here place," said one of them. "He still has a hankering after his mother's grave. When he got away before we nabbed him here."

The mystery was soon cleared up. The gentleman had escaped from a lunatic asylum, and was both deaf and dumb. The death of his mother, a few years before, had caused the mental aberration.

The horrors of that night are impressed as vividly upon my memory as though they had just occurred. The expenses of the journey were all defrayed, and I was presented with a handsome gratuity. I never ceased, however, to regret the loss of the favorite mare.

For the benefit of physicians we publish this unique account of an original pharmaceutical experiment, worked by means of a powerful medicine, which was not compounded merely of drugs. It was conjured out of the misty realms of nowhere by the fertile brains of Erckmann and Chatrian, and has been translated for ROMANCE by M. E. B.

MY ILLUSTRIOUS FRIEND DR. SELSAM.

It was late in the afternoon of September 19, 1885, that I called to see my old friend and comrade Dr. Selsam, Professor of Pathology, Director of the Hospital, etc., etc.

I found him alone in his magnificent library on the Bergstrasse, his elbows on a small marble table in front of him and his eyes fixed on a crystal globe, which seemed to contain nothing but clear water. The last rays of the setting sun were flooding the room with their crimson splendor, but the crystal globe seemed to cast such ghastly reflections on his thin face, sharp, knife-like nose, and pointed chin, that his head looked like the head of a corpse recently decapitated, and the red band around the neck of his dressing gown completed the illusion. He seemed so deeply absorbed that I was on the point of withdrawing, without disturbing his contemplations, when a big footman, whom I had passed snoring in the ante-chamber, suddenly woke up, and in stentorian tones announced: "Counsellor Theodore Kilrain."

Selsam drew a long breath, and slowly turned toward me like an automaton, saying: "Ah, is that you, Theodore?"

"Yes," I replied, "but what are you doing? Are you studying the elixir of life?"

I was quite taken aback by the scowl my words brought to his face. "Theodore," he said, after a moment's silence, "this is no time for jesting. I am studying the malady of your respected Aunt, Dame

Hannah Wandulich. What you told me of her yesterday is very serious, particularly her exaggerated expressions in speaking of music; her ecstasies, her exaltations,—all are symptoms of a dangerous disease."

"And were you trying to find the solution to her malady in that bowl of water?"

"Even so, and it is a most fortunate chance that brought you here. I was just wishing for you."

Pointing to a violin hanging on the wall, he continued: "Will you be kind enough to play me one of Mozart's sonatas?" The request was so unexpected, so singular, that I thought my friend's head had gone astray as well as my Aunt Hannah's. Divining my thoughts, he answered them, and with an ironical smile said: "Reassure yourself, Theodore, reassure yourself. My intellectual faculties are all right. I am on the road to making a grand, a sublime discovery."

At this I took down the violin, and began to examine it with an envious eye. It was one of those incomparable instruments which Frederick the Second had ordered to be manufactured for his especial flute accompaniments.

I had scarcely touched the bow to the strings, when I forgot my surroundings, forgot everything, in the beauty of the music, and the pure tones of the violin. With my hat on the floor and my eyes closed, I was in the seventh heaven of delight. Dr. Selsam, his crystal globe, and the illness of my venerable aunt, no longer existed for me.

How long this lasted, I know not. When I awoke, as from a dream, I found myself lying on the Doctor's sofa, wondering what had happened. In a weak voice I asked, "Well, Selsam, are you satisfied?"

Armed with a magnifying glass, he was carefully examining his globe. The water had become turbid. Thousands of "infusoria" were crossing and recrossing each other in every direction.

Selsam's face was radiant with delight. Rushing toward me and grasping both hands, he enthusiastically exclaimed: "Thanks, thanks, my dear friend and com-

rade! A thousand thanks! You have just rendered an immense service to science."

I was amazed. How could my playing be a service to science? I looked as incredulous as I felt, while Selsam continued, "My dear Theodore, I will not leave you in ignorance of the glorious part which you have played in the solution of this great problem. Come, follow me, and you shall see, and understand all."

As the night had come, he lighted a silver lamp, and, opening a side door, motioned me to follow him. I was a prey to the most profound emotions, as I walked through the long suite of rooms. I felt as if a revolution were going to be accomplished in my whole being. Perhaps I was going to receive the key to the invisible world.

The lamp threw a silvery light on the magnificent appointments of this sumptuous dwelling. Rich curtains, carpets, ornaments and statuary were pictured in its softened radiance. Finally we reached the top of a broad staircase. We descended into an inner court, our footsteps waking mysterious echoes.

There were several doors in this court. Selsam stopped before one and said: "This is my dissecting room. Don't be alarmed. Nature never yields her most precious secrets but through the hands of Death."

I wanted to turn back, but Selsam had already entered, and I was compelled to follow. To my horror I saw a corpse, the corpse of a young man, lying on a long oaken table. The head was thrown back. The eyes were wide open. On the breast was a deep incision. But what impressed me most was not the wound, nor the sombre look of the dead body; it was the immobility, the utter, death-like silence.

"Is this eternal annihilation?" I asked myself.

"No," answered Selsam, who seemed to see the thoughts coming and going in my brain. "No, it is the birth of a thousand lives. Myriads enslaved by one force are going to be set free by this change. That force—that will—was *here*."

He struck the head; it gave forth a hollow wooden

sound. Then he plunged his scalpel into the corpse. I started back in horror. He did not even notice the movement, but continued calmly talking.

"Do you see these little white fibres running in every direction? These are the nerves, the messengers carrying orders from the 'central molecule' to the extremities. Here are the organs of respiration, the lungs. Here, of circulation,—the heart, the veins, the arteries. Here, of digestion,—the stomach, the intestines, and each one has its separate molecules. But in life our welfare and comfort depend in a great measure upon our treatment of these infinitesimal creatures. They govern our organism."

"Then," I exclaimed, "where is our liberty? If I am the slave of infinitesimal molecules, how can I be held responsible for my actions?"

To this Selsam answered, "One molecule of my body can rebel against my whole being,—often does, but then it perishes, takes the consequences of its own act. In the same way, you are free. You can rebel against the laws of nature, misapply the power you have over the beings of which you are composed, and thus cause your own dissolution."

I could find no answer to this argument, and stood looking at him in breathless stupefaction. At last I said, "All this sounds very logical, and no doubt is a beautiful theory, but I fail to see what relation it has to your globe of water, my venerable aunt's illness, and the music you requested me to play?"

"Nothing is plainer," Selsam answered with a smile. "You certainly know that the vibrations of sound will set in motion grains of sand placed on the top of a drum, and cause them to form into geometrical figures of wonderful regularity."

"Yes," I replied, "but——"

"But," he impatiently exclaimed, "hear me out. In the same way in which that sound affects the molecules of water, the 'infusoria' that you saw in my globe, just so music acts upon the liquids of the body, bringing into existence infinitesimal animated beings, en-

dowed with motion. This is what physicians call 'equivocal evolution.'

"You must also know that wave sounds act upon the nervous system, and produce electricity. This in turn engenders thousands of millions of insects in our bodies, which attack our organs, and cause all the countless diseases which flesh is heir to,—the nature of which has hitherto been unknown, but my discovery makes all clear. It shows they are caused by these animalcules—namely, the 'myriapoda,' which have six feet, but no wings; the 'thysanoptera, whose abdomen and sides are covered with myriads of incomplete legs; the 'parasites,' with round eyes, and mouths like suction-pumps; the 'coleoptera,' the 'tepidoptera,' the 'hymenoptera,' and millions of 'rodentia,' which invade the body, devour it with their teeth, and gnaw it with their claws until it is like an old, worm-eaten log, dried up and withered,—all the blood gone to feed and enrich the 'ascarides.'"

Selsam's description actually made my hair stand on end. "And do you believe," I exclaimed, "that music, that sound, can cause all these disasters?"

"Without the shadow of a doubt," he replied. "You have only to look at the old, withered up musicians, or at your venerable aunt, to be convinced. There is but one remedy for that unfortunate dame,—but *one*, that can cure her."

"What is that, Selsam? I am her heir, it is true, but it would be a terrible weight on my conscience if I left any thing untried which could save her life."

"Yes, I recognize the natural delicacy of your feelings. It is affection, and not interest that prompts you. But it is getting late. I have just heard the midnight bell. Come to-morrow night at ten, and I will have the remedy ready,—the only that can save your Aunt Hannah. I shall cure her, you may rest assured. I give you my professional word on it."

With that, he opened a door leading from the court into the Bergstrasse. We shook hands, and I repaired to my room, a prey to the most painful reflections. I

could not sleep a wink that night, but racked my brain wondering how Selsam was going to expel the "ascarides," and millions of "rodentia" wandering through my venerable Aunt Wandulich.

On the next day the same thoughts pursued me. So great was my excitement that I walked up and down the streets talking to myself, causing every one to stare at me. I stopped before a chemist's window, reading the labels on his innumerable bottles.

"Great heavens!" I thought, "it is a lucky man who can find the remedy that will cure, without killing the 'central molecule.'"

That night at supper, which I took alone with my good aunt, I watched her with a heart full of tender compassion.

"Alas," I mused, "what would you say, my poor Aunt Wandulich, if you knew the millions of ferocious little beasts which are now devouring you, as you quietly sip your tea?"

"What makes you look at me in that peculiar way, Theodore?" she inquired anxiously.

"Oh, nothing! nothing!" I answered.

"Yes, it is something. You think I am worse. Do I look ill?"

"It is true, aunt, you are a little pale. You have received some new music lately, have you not?"

"Yes, I received the score of a new opera yesterday."

"I knew it, my dear aunt. You have spent the whole day at your piano, interpreting, going into ecstasies."

She turned scarlet.

"What does this mean, sir? Is it your business—? Haven't I the right to?"

"Certainly you have the right, my dear aunt, only it is suicidal. You are ruining your nervous system."

"Nervous fiddlesticks! you don't know what you are talking about. You are crazy."

"For goodness' sake, aunt, calm yourself! Anger produces electricity, which acts on the body, engendering millions of insects."

"Insects," she screamed, bounding to her feet. "Did

you ever see any insects on me, sir? How dare you insult me! Insects! Insects! Katrina! Louisa! Bring me my smelling-salts, quick! Leave the room, sir!"

"But, aunt," I stammered.

"Leave the room, sir! I will disinherit you! you have insulted me!"

She shrieked. She raged. Her false front slipped to one side. Her cap fell over her ear. It was a frightful scene. Getting up and going to her, I exclaimed, "My dear aunt, do be calm. I am not speaking of the insects you think of, but of the 'myriapoda,' 'coleoptera,' 'hymenoptera,' 'thysanoptera,' the countless army of microscopic monsters which have invaded your body and are devouring you by piecemeal."

At this, my venerable Aunt Wandulich fell back in a dead swoon, her arms limp, her face pale as death, and the paint on her cheeks showing like two spots of blood.

I was out of the house in two seconds. I rushed to my friend Dr. Selsam, as livid as a corpse, crying: "The crisis has come!"

There I stopped. I was in the midst of a large company assembled in the doctor's library. There was Daniel Bremen, the keeper of the Archæological Museum, with his powdered wig, round face, and frog-like eyes. He was holding a gigantic horn to his lips, and seemed to be showing the company how to use it.

There was Chapel-Master Hoffer, doubled up in a big chair, and with his long legs stuck under the table, busy examining some other queer-looking instrument. Kaspar Hansbrick, the curator of the hospital, and Dr. Heilsman, the Dean of the Faculty, were also there, in their dress coats and white cravats. One of them was armed with what seemed an immense bronze waiter; the other, with a gigantic drum, covered with goat-skin.

These persons, seated around the library table, made such a grotesque picture, with their puffed-out cheeks, and round, protruding eyes, that I stood transfixed on the threshold, with out-stretched hand and gaping mouth.

Dr. Selsam gravely motioned me to a seat, while the

keeper of the Museum, Daniel Bremen, went on with his explanations.

"This, gentlemen," he said, "is the famous 'buscatibia' of the Swiss. It has terrific power, capable of drowning the roar of the loudest cataract. If Counsellor Theodore will use it, I have no doubt he will produce a great effect."

On saying this, he placed the horn in my hand, and, turning to Kaspar Hansbrick, said: "Your drum is the most wonderful ever invented. It is the karabo of the Egyptians. The Abyssinians used it in all their martial music. You, Dean Heilsman, have only to strike on this waiter from time to time. It is the celebrated 'tam-tam,' whose lugubrious sound resembles the tolling of our great cathedral bell. In the silence of night it will have a magnificent effect."

"Are you ready, gentlemen? Do you understand?"

"Perfectly," we all exclaimed.

"Then let us go."

"Wait a moment," said Dr. Selsam, "until I explain my remedy to my friend Theodore. My dear friend, the condition of your respected aunt requires heroic treatment. After long meditation and research, a luminous idea has struck me. Your aunt is suffering from a weakness of the nervous system caused by the excessive use of music. Now, my remedy is to combine the Hippocratic treatment of 'contraria contrariis curantur,' with the teachings of our immortal Hahnemann, 'similia similibus curantur.' Nothing can be more unlike the sickly, sentimental operas of the present day than the wild music of the Africans. Therefore I have borrowed their musical instruments, and intend to treat your aunt with a Hottentot symphony, and thus the principle of 'contraria contrariis curantur' will be complied with. On the other hand, nothing is more like music than music itself. So you see the theory, 'similia similibus curantur,' will also be complied with. The idea seems to me sublime."

"Selsam!" I cried, "you are a man of genius. Hippocrates advanced the thesis, Hahnemann the antithesis

—but you have created the synthesis. It is a grand discovery."

"Yes," he modestly answered, "but allow me to finish. Consequently I applied to Master Dr. Bremen, the keeper for the Museum, who not only lent me the 'tam-tam,' the 'busca-tibia' and 'karabo' from his collection, but volunteered to play on the Hottentot fife, which will be a valuable addition to our improvised orchestra."

I made a low bow to the keeper of the Museum, and expressed my deep gratitude. He seemed much moved and said: "Counsellor, I am happy to be of service to you, and your venerable Aunt Dame Wandulich, whose numerous virtues have been obscured by her unhappy exaggeration of music. May we bring her back to the simple taste of our forefathers!"

"Yes! I pray God we may succeed," I cried most fervently.

"Let us go, gentlemen, let us go," said Dr. Selsam.

We proceeded down the grand stair-way into the Bergstrasse. It was now eleven o'clock. The night was dark, not a single star shone in the great canopy above us. The weather-vanes screeched in the wintry winds, the lights on the lamp-posts burned with fitful gleams, as we glided through the streets, keeping close to the walls, like so many assassins, our instruments concealed under our cloaks.

When we arrived at my aunt's, I noiselessly turned the key in the lock, we cautiously entered the vestibule, and, by the light of a wax taper Selsam had brought with him, we ascended the stairs, and took our places opposite my aunt's bedroom, our instruments ready, waiting for the doctor's signal. Nothing stirred in the house. It was wrapped in profound silence.

Selsam raised his hand. "Commence."

My horn, the tam-tam, the karabo, the fife, all started at the same time. Great heavens! no words can convey an idea of that savage music. I felt as if the roof would surely be carried off. We heard a wild shriek, but far from stopping, a kind of rage seemed to possess us. The drum, the tam-tam, the fife went on with re-

newed vigor. Such a terrific noise! I could no longer hear my horn, although it was capable of drowning the crashing of thunder.

But the "tam-tam" was the wildest, maddest of all. Its lugubrious vibrations aroused a sense of terror, a feeling as if a cannibal banquet was being prepared, and you were to be served as the roast. My hair stood on end. The trumpet of the final judgment, I am sure, will never produce a more awful effect.

Twenty times Selsam shouted for us to stop. We were deaf, carried away by a kind of diabolical frenzy.

At last, exhausted, out of breath, scarcely able to stand, we were forced to stop our infernal concert. Selsam, putting his finger on his lips, said: "Hush, listen." But our ears were buzzing so we could scarcely have heard the shriek of a locomotive.

After waiting a few minutes, the doctor grew uneasy, and softly entered my aunt's room to learn the effect of his remedy. He staid so long that I was on the point of following him, when he came out exceedingly pale, and giving us a strange, startled look, said: "Gentlemen, let's go home."

"But what is the result of the experiment?" I cried, catching hold of his arm.

He turned around, and slowly answered: "The result—*your venerable aunt is dead.*"

"Dead!" I exclaimed, starting back.

"Yes! the electrical commotion was too strong, too violent. It destroyed her 'ascarides,' but unfortunately killed the *central molecule.* That does not, however, disprove my theory in the least. Your aunt is dead—*but she died cured of her disease.*"

With that, he walked out. We silently followed him, pale with fright, and separated without a word. The conclusion of the affair had terrified us.

On the next day the whole town knew that Dame Hannah Wandulich was dead, that she had died suddenly in the night. There was some talk among the neighbors of a terrible, frightful noise they had heard, but it was attributed to a violent thunder storm. No

one paid any attention to it, and we escaped without the slightest suspicion.

Besides, Dr. Selsam was called in to decide the cause of death. He declared that Dame Hannah had been carried off by a stroke of apoplexy, superinduced by cerebral excitement.

Six months after this event, he published a book on the cure of "Helminthiasis" by music.

It had an immense success, a world-wide reputation. The Emperor decorated him with the "Cross of the Black Vulture." The Empress deigned to congratulate him in person. He was elected President of the National Society of Science. In short, he is now a very celebrated man.

As for me, I shall never cease to reproach myself for contributing to my poor aunt's death, by blowing on that infernal horn. But I take Heaven to witness, I never thought of hurting her; the idea of killing her "central molecule" by electricity never entered my brain.

In truth, I confess to my shame that, if any one had told me that music (even a Hottentot symphony) could have killed a fly, I should have laughed in their face.

But now since the wonderful discovery of Dr. Selsam, I deplore my ignorance. It breaks my heart to think my dear Aunt Wandulich was his first victim.

The idea of an artist's falling in love with his own work is not a new one. Few of us in fact know even one artist who has not revealed a similar weakness. But it is seldom that any of the guild carry the matter to such a length as did "Whitmore." The tale of his love and woe was written for ROMANCE by Frederic Ernest Holman.

WHITMORE'S MASTERPIECE.

"JOHNSON," said Brooks, as we rose from a table in the Café de Rosa, after having discussed an excellent Parisian dinner, "come round to my rooms this evening. I have something strange to show you."

"What is it?" I asked. "Another old Master that you have discovered, or a new Venus that you have painted."

"Neither," replied Brooks. "To tell you the truth, I don't know what it is myself, but be sure and come, and we will together endeavor to find out."

With this, he lighted a cigar, and excusing himself, left the café and vanished in the crowd upon the street.

That evening I hastened over to Brooks' suite in the Hotel de Ville. I found him reclining in an easy-chair, looking the very personification of comfort. I seated myself on a lounge near by and said, "I am now ready, Brooks, for anything you have to show me."

Without replying, he rose from his chair and going over to his private desk, he unlocked it and drew from one of its secret drawers a package carefully done up and sealed. For a moment he stood scanning it, as if in deep and far-away thought. My curiosity was piqued.

I watched him in silence, but with inexpressible eagerness.

Suddenly he turned toward me and asked, "How long is it since you heard from Whitmore?"

"I have his letter here," I replied, and, taking it from my pocket, I read aloud its date, "March sixth, 1889."

"That is also the date of my last letter," said he,

coming over and sitting down beside me. "But yesterday I received this parcel, evidently from him. Tearing off the outer wrapper, I found this card attached to the inside."

He handed me, as he spoke, a card. It bore these words:

I send you this package, believing you, with the exception of Johnson, to be my warmest, truest friend. I do not chance to have his last address. You will see him and notify him that you are to open the parcel on the evening of the first of September.

Yours as ever, ERIC WHITMORE.

As I passed the card back to Brooks, after reading it, I found him regarding me with so strange an expression that it checked a bit of pleasantry I was about to utter. As he did not speak, I too remained silent, for I saw that what I had been inclined to regard as one of Whitmore's practical jokes, Brooks had taken seriously.

During this silence my mind ran rapidly over my acquaintance with Whitmore.

He had been the only American at the Institute of Art, where Brooks and I had studied, except ourselves, and naturally there had sprung up between us three the warmest and most lasting friendship.

Brooks and I had been compelled to make our own way in the world, while Whitmore, possessing an independent fortune, had pursued art, not merely as a pastime, but as a passion.

At the termination of our course of study, Brooks and I concluded to remain in Paris, but Whitmore returned to New York with a burning desire to do something that would make his genius—for he had more than talent, and he felt it—an astonishment to his native country. Since our separation, covering a period of some years, he had corresponded with Brooks and with me at regular and frequent intervals up to the 6th of March, since which time we had neither of us heard anything from him.

I was aroused from these reminiscences by hearing Brooks exclaim, "The time has come, Johnson. Let us open the package."

"All right," said I, and forthwith he proceeded to cut the binding and break the seal. It took him but a moment to do this, and then, amidst a silence in which you might have heard the traditional pin drop, he drew forth two separate papers and laid them on the table between us.

On the back of one was written in Whitmore's familiar chirography, "A History to Satisfy My Friends." On the other was the legend, "Last Will and Testament of Eric Whitmore."

"Good God!" said I, as with trembling fingers I replaced the latter on the table from which I had snatched it to make myself believe that it was real. "Can Whitmore be dead?"

"Heaven knows," replied Brooks, his face pale as the whitest marble—"Heaven knows. Let us read the History, and see if that will not shed light upon the matter."

Suiting the action to the word, he tore it open. On the outer page were these words:

"To My Friends, Brooks and Johnson, this is written in explanation of the step which I am about to take. If, after reading it, you are inclined to believe me insane, I cannot blame you, but I swear to you that whatever else I may be, I am *not* that."

By this time, as you may readily imagine, all doubt as to the awful seriousness of the matter had fled from my mind, and it was with anxiety unutterable that I watched Brooks as he turned a page and prepared to read the manuscript. Even Brooks, calm and cool as he was wont to be, was visibly and deeply moved, but with great self-control he succeeded in keeping his voice clear and steady, as he read the history to the end. It was as follows:

"This narrative is designed to throw some light on what would otherwise be an inexplicable mystery to you. I feel that you two have a right to expect of me some

explanation of my strange course. For several months I have been hard at work upon an ideal head, the origin of which I cannot give until you have read further. From the first touch of my brush to the canvas my mind seemed to be inspired and my hand guided by some unseen and unknown power. Under the influence of this unknown power I wrought day in and day out, feeling neither weariness nor satiety, and often wishing that there were no night, that I might reach the glorious consummation the sooner. Slowly my ideal grew in beauty and expression. As it neared completion, it became almost an object of worship to me. I was carried away with the feeling that the dream of my life was to be realized. How I toiled! The gray dawn daily broke upon my preparations for my work, and the evening twilight caught me straining my eyes to accomplish a few more touches. Never did colors blend more harmoniously. Never did brushes work more deftly. Never did the skill of the hand execute more perfectly the thought of the mind or the purpose of the will. No flower ever grew to perfection more naturally, or developed into blushing delicacy or glowing splendor more spontaneously. It was labor indeed—labor arduous and unremitting, but it was the labor of impassioned and almost transporting love. At last it was finished. I could do nothing more to it. I trembled to put another touch to it lest I should mar its marvellous, its entrancing, its supernal loveliness.

"As I stood there on that afternoon gazing rapturously upon it, it seemed a vision from heaven. There could be no doubt about it. My Masterpiece would give me the fame I had all my life coveted. Criticism would stand disarmed before it. Not a possible line of grace was wanting; not a tint or shade could lend it further charm. Then I knew that it was not I that had accomplished the work before me,—that from conception to completion, from the first stroke to the last, my hand had been guided by some invisible power and my brain inspired by some supernatural intelligence. All along I had realized that I was under some mysterious and

magic spell, that I could not resist, and that I had neither will nor wish to break. Yet never until that awesome moment had I been completely overwhelmed with the strange and blessed consciousness.

"As time passed on, the picture became a part of my very being. Away from it I was uneasy, restless, moody, as if my heart's best love and idol were absent. I could not comprehend my own feelings in regard to it. I could not fathom the absorbing passion that I felt for it. It dominated me entirely. It enslaved me. In vain I attempted a new task, or groped for some new ideal. Palette and brush grew distasteful to me. I painted only to wipe out what I had painted before. I knew not what to do with myself, and queried sometimes whether I really were myself. And yet, the consciousness of my perfect sanity was never stronger or more real.

"Things wore on wearily in this sad way for some time. My very health was yielding to the oppressive weight and power of my inexplicable passion. One day, as I sat gazing intently on that face of faces, whether in the body or out of the body I could scarcely tell, the sober thought flashed upon me that I was infatuated with a picture, an idol of my own creation, a concrete figment of the imagination, and the infatuation was spoiling me. If I continued to indulge in it, the luxury would ruin me. I must arouse myself and break away from it.

"Never mortal man resolved more stoutly, or struggled more mightily, or failed more completely. My resolution proved a rope of sand. My very efforts only served to entangle me more hopelessly and helplessly in the meshes of my infatuation. I had no friend to whom I could tell my strange story, or unfold my feelings.

"I grew morbid, and yet preferred my wretchedness to all the charms of society and all the pleasures of the world. I closed my studio and shut myself up in solitude. The rumor went abroad that I had left my country. It was even reported in the papers that I had

gone to Paris to pursue my art. In the retirement of my rooms, to which I had removed the traps from my studio, I brooded. Alone with that almost divine face, I could do nothing but worship and adore.

"One week ago, I stood in front of it in the early twilight. I was watching it as it faded like a summer sunset, when, suddenly, out of the growing dusk it spoke to me. I say it spoke to me. No human voice was ever more audible or more certain. But such a voice was never heard by mortal man before. It was more heavenly than the beauty of the face itself. It thrilled me to the very centre of my soul, and threw me into an ecstacy of beatific excitement. The voice told me that the picture was only the painted semblance of a spiritual being far more beautiful, and that that spiritual being was the complement of my soul's desires, my real, my only possible love, whom I could only meet and know and enjoy forever by dying; that the voice was her voice, and that her hand and inspiration had guided me in portraying it upon material canvas,—her very likeness, as nearly as it was possible for it to be so expressed. It did not suggest to me that I should seek to realize the fruition of my great, my all-controlling passion, by any effort of my own in opposition to, or contravention of, any of the ordinary laws of nature. It simply uttered what I have written, and left me once more to my solitude and silence.

"Since that night my despair at being separated from a being so lovely and adorable—my only possible happiness—has been unutterable, unendurable. I can no longer bear it. I must be with her, if that be possible. I have deliberately determined to make the effort. The feeble flame of this earthly existence is no longer worth fanning. And now, dear old friends, good-bye. I will not confer even with you respecting my purpose, knowing well that you would do all in your power to dissuade me from it, which would only give me needless pain. If I have calculated aright, when you read this I shall be dead. You will see by my will that everything I have is left to you. Accept it and

devote it to your divine art. I firmly believe that in my situation you would do as I am about to do.

ERIC WHITMORE."

Here Brooks dropped the manuscript, and looked me steadily in the face for a full minute. He seemed powerless to speak. His face was blanched. His eyes were filled with tears. At length he broke the silence with "Poor Eric! Poor Eric!"

Long and late we communed with each other concerning the strange, sad story, when, suddenly, there was a rap at the door, which opened at my bidding. A messenger entered with a cablegram. Brooks hastily tore it from the envelope and read it aloud. It was from the proprietor of a well-known hotel in New York, and read as follows:

"New York, Sept. 1st, 1889.
To Horace Brooks
Hotel de Ville
Paris
France.

Eric Whitmore shot himself in his rooms, at five o'clock this afternoon."

It takes brave man to admit that he is afraid. Perhaps anybody might have been scared if he had been situated as was th watchman in the following story, which was written for ROMANCE by Lieut. J. H. Scott, U. S. R. M.

CATCHING A COOLIE.

It was in the eighties,—I forget the exact date,—that I was an able seaman on board the ship "John E. Redwood" of Phillipsburg, engaged in the East India trade. This was my first deep-water voyage. Before this I had been in Western Ocean vessels. During the dog-watches my mind was filled with the wonders to be seen in a deep waterman. I heard many yarns about the marvellous tricks in juggling of the natives of the countries we visited, and of the fairly desperate agility of the thieves that infested the seaport towns of India and China.

After an uneventful voyage, we arrived at Bombay, and one of the crew having been chosen for night-watchman, the rest of us were employed in working cargo. The watchman's duty consisted in keeping a vigilant watch from six in the evening until six next morning. He was responsible for everything that was stolen. The rest of the time he was allowed to do as he pleased.

My chum Bill Davis was chosen for this duty, and we rather envied him. To see him sitting down in the shade smoking his pipe, while we were working our sole-cases off under a broiling sun and with scarcely a breath of wind to stir the air, was enough to make anyone envious.

One Saturday afternoon Bill came to me as I was taking a quie smoke, and asked me to stand his watch that night. As Bill had been a good ship-mate, I could not refuse him, although I was dead tired. All hands except th captain, the mate, and myself, left for the beach, bound on a grand lark.

It was still daylight, but even then the ship seemed lonely and deserted. The captain and mate were sitting on the poop abaft the after-house, having a game and a smoke. I lingered round the booby-hatch and thought of the good times ashore and felt lonelier every minute.

After sunset there was scarcely any twilight, for the change between day and night was almost instantaneous. What little breeze had been blowing throughout the day had died out, and the sea was like an immense mirror. The sky was cloudless, and it was one of those perfect nights that are only seen in small latitudes. The men-of-war started drilling with their search-lights, and the sight, as the light fell on some stately ship, making her stand out in bold relief while the rest of the fleet was an indistinguishable mass of shadows, was one never to be forgotten. Watching the various doings in the harbor served to pass the time, and I soon forgot my surroundings, so absorbed did I become in the different things that were going on. Nothing disturbed the stillness but now and then a boat-load of drunken firemen going off to their vessel and disputing with their boatman. Occasionally some one would start a song, and as it drifted over the water, its harshness was lost and only its beauty remained.

One by one these sounds died away, and as there was nothing left to divert my thoughts, they came back to myself and the ship. The silence was oppressive. I felt insignificant in the midst of it. How small I was! My mind was uneasy and restive. In fact, I was nervous, and I could not account for it. In order to calm myself as well as to kill time, I began walking up and down the poop; but having worked hard all day, I was soon fagged and began hunting around for something that would occupy me. In my wanderings I found two or three sheets of a New York newspaper. This was a prize. I rigged the binnacle lamp in the wheel-house, and, fixing myself comfortably in the captain's chair, I crowded on all sail for intellectual amusement.

The only thing I could find was stock reports, adver-

tisements and shipping news. This was rather of a disappointment, but I started in to read those. I found some of them quite interesting, and presently I was taking solid comfort in reading what I felt to be a species of news—dry as it was from home.

The door in front of me was open, and the moon had come up full. Everything in its direct rays was bathed in the brightest light, but the shadows were horribly dark. I happened to glance up as I puzzled over a queerly-worded notice, and my eye caught, for a second only, the shadow of the head and shoulders of a coolie. As I saw it, there flashed through my mind the yarns that I had heard about the coolies stripping themselves, then oiling their bodies, and swimming off to vessels with their "dhu" or daggers; plundering the unguarded crews and disembowelling all who tried to seize them as they slipped through their hands. I jumped for the deck, sheath-knife in hand.

When I got on deck, there was no one in sight, and I listened for some sound; but all was as quiet as a deep underground cell. It was as though both of us were even holding our breath so that we should not betray our whereabouts. There was not even the lapping of waves against the ship's sides. As I started to sneak to the after-part of the wheel-house, I could hear my heart beat, and the sound of my footsteps as my bare feet lightly touched the deck. When I reached the corner of the wheel house, I brought my knife down around the corner to the full extent of my arm. Not feeling anything, I ventured to look around the corner. Not seeing any one, I turned the corner, and in this way I proceeded around the house, carefully knifing around each corner before turning it. After having made the round of the wheel-house, I doubled on my track and went back the other way; but I could see no sign of the presence of anyone, nor had I heard any noise. So after searching the decks, forecastle and forward-house, I concluded that whoever I had seen must have slipped overboard and escaped, or my imagination had played me a trick. I finally brought to again in the chair, and

began to read once more; but I had somehow lost interest and felt nervous. Every little while, I got up and made the tour of the deck.

I had hardly settled myself after one of these tours when I was startled by a suppressed groan from the captain's room, followed by gasps, as if for breath. These were succeeded by a strange gurgling sound. My blood ran cold, and for a minute I was paralyzed. Then I understood it all. Instead of the coolie going overboard, he had descended into the after-cabin. While gathering together plunder he had awakened the captain. Then to save himself, he had cut the captain's throat, which accounted for the noise.

To preserve myself it became necessary for me to either secure this coolie or to kill him; and as it would doubtless be easier to kill him than to try to secure him, I sneaked out of the wheel-house to take a look around. I carefully studied the ground, in order to decide upon the best place for me to take up my station. I finally fixed on the companion-way. Noiselessly I crawled on top of the house and knelt on the companion-way slide. With my knife raised ready for striking, I awaited the coming up of the coolie and murderer. I had decided that it would be best to stick the knife into his brain or alongside one of the big arteries in his neck.

I anxiously waited, with every nerve strained, to detect his first approach, every muscle tense, and ready for a quick and strong attack. Cramps in my legs seized me, but I did not dare to move, afraid each moment that he would appear.

While in this position, and while every sense was on the alert, I was startled by a movement and a groan behind me. I turned with an involuntary cry, not knowing what would confront me,—but I saw nothing.

By this time I was so scared that I was unable to think for a moment or two. After collecting my senses, I knew that, although the sound seemed to have been right back of me, it must have come from the mate's room in the forward part of the house. As there were two ways of getting down into the after-house, I was puzzled as to

which one to guard. I finally decided to close the after companion-way and take my station at the watch-house, which was the only other way by which the coolie could get out. If he came up the companion-way, I should hear him and be able to reach him before he slipped overboard.

Sneaking along the alley-way, I took up my position alongside the watch-house door, and my senses being strained to the utmost by this time, I could faintly hear some one moving about down below. I was worked up to an awful pitch of excitement; in fact, my muscles had been strained so long that I trembled as with ague. My nerves were at the breaking point.

How long I stood there I do not know. I finally got so worked up that I could hardly stand. I came to the conclusion that, if the coolie should come up, I was then too weak to offer any resistance, and that, if something didn't happen soon, I should lose my mind. I concluded that I could stand the strain no longer. Carefully making my way to the rail, I broke down. I became afraid —afraid even to go on the main deck and into the deep shadows. I was afraid to stand still; I kept looking over my shoulder and turning around, not knowing where I should be attacked or from what point. My mind was getting unbalanced under the awful pressure. To save myself I walked the topgallant rail to the forecastle. From there, I went to the flying jibboom pole facing inboard. My mind was made up to jump overboard if anybody tried to come out after me. I sat there the rest of that night, knowing I should be accused of murdering these men; but I came to the conclusion that it was better to stand a trial for double murder than to become a maniac by watching at that watch-house door.

While awaiting daylight, I could see myself accused of murder and everybody laughing at my defense. I could see myself hung in a foreign country.

After a long time I gathered what little courage I had left, and came back to the poop and carefully searched all nooks and corners; but I did not dare to go down below until the moon had set. Then I noise-

lessly sneaked below. To my surprise, I found the mate peacefully snoring in his bunk. This added considerably to my courage. Then I listened at the door of the captain's room. I distinctly heard him breathe. This was an immense relief. I returned to the deck, and felt like kicking myself. I tried to think it over. The only way in which I could work it out was this—either my mind had played me a trick, or I had really seen a coolie's shadow, and, alarmed by my movements, he had slipped overboard before securing his booty. Certainly we never missed anything, and the captain and the mate had mumbled or groaned in their sleep.

The delirious joy expressed by the retainers of the Marquis de Tours-nobles and their unwillingness to work after they had become rich will remind our readers of Mr. O. B. Bunce's clever story on a similar theme. "The Highest Prize" was translated for ROMANCE by Mary Springer from the Spanish of the celebrated Madame Emilia Pardo Bazan.

THE HIGHEST PRIZE.

At the time of Godoy's reign the property belonging to the noble family of Tours-nobles de Fuencar was considered to be the most secure and valuable in Spain; but political vicissitudes and other misfortunes gradually wasted it. The last Marquis of Tours-nobles, a spendthrift and roué, who used to give great cause for gossip at court, finished by making ducks and drakes of it. When the Marquis de Tours-nobles was about sixty years old, he determined to retire to his estate of Fuencar, the only unmortgaged property which he had, and there devote his whole attention to taking care of his health, which was not less impaired than his fortune. As Fuencar did not produce enough to allow him to live in luxury, he determined to regulate his household affairs so that he might not lack any of the comforts of life. So he provided himself with a chaplain who, in addition to celebrating mass on Sundays and on holidays, would play whist, and checkers, with the marquis. He would also regale him with the latest news from the political journals, and make remarks on their contents. He had, beside the chaplain, a steward or butler, who collected the rents most rigidly and overlooked the farming; a stout and phlegmatic coachman, who solemnly drove the two mules hitched to the family coach; a house-keeper, quiet and solicitous, not young enough to be dangerous, nor old enough to be repulsive; a valet, whom he had brought from Madrid, a reminder as well as a relic of the dissipated life he had led, but who had now reformed as much as his master, and was

as discreet and quick as he had ever been; and, lastly, a cook, clean as a smelt, with wonderful skill in cooking all the dishes of the old-fashioned Spanish *cuisine*, which satisfied the marquis's appetite without impairing his digestion. With such excellent functionaries, the marquis's household affairs ran on as smoothly as a well-regulated watch, and he felt more than ever rejoiced to think that he had abandoned the temptations of Madrid to cast anchor at Fuencar. His health improved, and his sleep and digestion were duly regulated.

If the marquis lived well, his servitors were not so badly off, either. So that they might not leave him, he paid them higher wages than anybody else paid in that province; and, furthermore, he was always showering presents and other kindnesses upon them; consequently they were delighted with their master. They had little work to do, and that was well regulated and methodical.

It was exceedingly cold last December, and the country surrounding Fuencar was covered three feet deep with snow. The marquis, unable to drive out as usual, would sometimes descend to the farm kitchen, fleeing from solitude and instinctively seeking social intercourse. Here he would warm his hands before the fire, while his teeth chattered with the cold, and join in the laughter which the overseer and the old shepherd excited with their clownish pranks. He also observed that the cook had beautiful eyes.

Among all the things they talked of he heard that his servants intended to club together and buy a lottery ticket for the Christmas drawing.

Very early on the following day the marquis sent a telegram to a neighboring city, and that same evening the good-natured gentleman entered the kitchen, flourishing some papers, and announcing to his domestics, with great glee, that he had fulfilled their desires by taking a ticket for the next drawing, of which he would give them two-tenths.

When they heard him, they burst into cries of joy and blessed him heartily, with the exception of the shep-

herd, an old and waggish but sagacious man, who shook his head, saying that anybody who took shares in a ticket with a gentleman drove away good luck. His remark displeased the marquis greatly, and he retorted by saying that the shepherd should not have any share in his ticket.

The marquis did not sleep as well as usual that night. Some troublesome thoughts kept him awake. He did not like the covetous way in which his servants had talked about the money they might get.

"These people," said the marquis to himself, "if they could fill their pockets, would leave me in the lurch. And what plans they are making! Celedonio, the coachman, spoke of setting up a tavern, in order to guzzle down wine, without doubt. That stupid Rita, the house-keeper, wants to open a boarding-house. Jacinto, my valet, kept quiet, but he kept looking at the cook out of the corner of his eye. By the way, the cook is quite good-looking. Bah!"

As the marquis said "Bah!" he turned over in bed and wrapped the bed-clothes around his ears, for the cold crept in at his neck.

"Well, what do I care?" he continued; "they will not draw the high prize, at all, and they will have to wait for what I'll leave them when I die." A few moments later the marquis was sound asleep and snoring loudly.

The lottery drawing took place two days later, and Jacinto, who was as smart as a steel-trap, arranged it so that his master should send him at that time to the city after something that was needed. Night came, and still Jacinto had not returned, though he had left the house at daybreak.

The servants were gathered together in the kitchen as usual, when they heard the sound of horse's hoofs on the fresh-fallen snow, and a man, whom they recognized as Jacinto, fell in their midst like a bombshell. He was pale and trembling, and cried, in a faint voice: "The highest prize!"

The marquis was in his study, with his legs wrapped up in a thick shawl and engaged in smoking a cigar,

while the chaplain tickled his ears with the political news of the day, taken from *El Siglo Futuro*. Suddenly he stopped short and both listened. They heard a loud noise, which they found proceeded from the kitchen, where the servants were uttering delirious and discordant cries of joy.

The marquis was annoyed at the uproar, but fearing to compromise his dignity, he sent the chaplain to find out what had happened and to bid them keep quiet. The latter soon returned, and, throwing himself on the sofa, exclaimed: "I am suffocating!" while he tore open his collar and damaged his vest in his efforts to unfasten it.

The marquis rushed to his aid, and as he fanned him with *El Siglo Futuro*, the following words burst from his lips:

"The highest prize—we—have—drawn—the——"

In spite of his infirmities, the marquis rushed down into the kitchen, and as he reached the threshold he stopped still in amazement at the strange proceedings which were going on there. Celedonio and Rita were executing a jig, skipping about like dancing-jacks; Jacinto had caught hold of a chair and was waltzing around with that; Pepa was beating time on a kettle, making the most outlandish sounds, and the overseer was rolling about on the floor, crying or barking, "*Viva la Virgin!* All hail to Mary!"

As soon as they saw the marquis, they all flew at him with open arms, and before he could prevent it they lifted him up and tossed him about like a ball from one to another, until, seeing that he was beside himself with rage, they left him on the floor. It was even worse for him then, for Pepa, the cook, seized him by the waist and dragged him all around the room, dancing a mad galop; while the overseer presented a wine-jug to him, insisting that he should take a drink, and assuring him that the wine was very fine. He was quite sure of this fact, for he had already drunk about half of it.

As soon as the marquis was able to free himself he

retreated to his private apartment, wishing to relieve his mind by telling the chaplain all about the insolence of his servants, and to talk about the high prize. To his great astonishment he saw the chaplain wrapped in his cloak, and putting on his hat preparatory to going out.

"Where are you going, Don Calixto, for the Lord's sake?" exclaimed the marquis, in astonishment.

Well, Don Calixto, by his leave, was going to Sevilla to see his family, and give them the good news, as well as to collect his part of the lottery ticket, which amounted to several thousand dollars.

"And you will leave me now! And how shall I hear mass?"

Just at that moment the valet thrust his pointed nose in at the door. If the marquis would allow him, he also would go after what was coming to him.

The marquis shouted, at the top of his voice, that they must be "possessed by the Old Nick," to wish to go off at such an hour of the night, when the snow was so deep,—to which both Don Calixto and Jacinto replied that the train would leave the next station at twelve o'clock that night, and that they would go, even if it had to be on foot. The marquis was just about to say, "But Jacinto must stay, for I need him," when the coachman's ruddy face showed itself at the door. Without knocking or asking permission to enter, he came in to take his leave of his master also, for he was going to collect his share of the hard cash.

"And the mules, who will take care of them?" shouted his master. "And who will drive the coach?"

"Whoever you please, your excellency, for I shall no longer drive," replied the Jehu, turning his back, and making way for Donna Rita. This estimable person did not walk in as she usually did, as though treading on eggs, but she danced in, noisy and gay, with her hair dishevelled, and shaking a big bunch of keys which she handed to the marquis, saying:—"These belong to the pantry, and to the ward-robe, your excellency."

"May the evil one fly away with you and all your

kind, you old witch! Do you expect me to attend to the broth and to cook!"

Donna Rita did not wait to hear the end of his remarks, for she went off shouting with glee, and the others followed furiously in her train, pursued by the marquis, who came near catching up with them in the kitchen, but he did not dare to follow them outside of the house, for it was so cold. By the light of the moon, he saw them all go off. Don Calixto took the lead; then came Celedonio and Donna Rita, arm-in-arm, and, lastly, Jacinto close to the feminine form which the marquis recognized as that of Pepa the cook. Pepilla also had left him. Alas!

The marquis looked around the deserted kitchen, and saw that the fire was going out. At the same time he heard a grunt. He looked around, and there was the overseer near the hearth, asleep, dead drunk. On the following morning the old shepherd, who did not want to drive away the luck, made the Marquis De Tours-nobles some bread and garlic soup, so that that noble gentleman was enabled to eat something hot on the first day on which he awoke to find himself a millionaire.

It is unnecessary to describe the magnificent establishment which the marquis set up in Madrid; but we ought not to omit that he hired a cook, whose stews were gastronomic feats or poems. It is believed that some of these delicious dishes, too heartily enjoyed by the marquis, brought on the disease which carried him to the grave. Notwithstanding this belief, I surmise that his end was due to the shock which he suffered on the day that his magnificent span of English horses ran away with him, for he died shortly after in his palatial residence on Alcala Street.

When his will was opened, they found that he had left all of his property to the shepherd of Fuencar.

Those who enjoy shuddering may well shudder over this brilliantly conceived story by Grant Allen. It is said that no piece of really artistic work is destitute of the moral quality. This is especially perceptible in "Selwyn Utterton's Nemesis," which originally appeared in *Black and White.*

SELWYN UTTERTON'S NEMESIS

Selwyn Utterton's wife lay dying on her bed. A nurse sat by her side in a snowy white cap; but Selwyn Utterton himself was out visiting his patients. He had a passion for his profession, had Selwyn Utterton. So trivial a circumstance as the mere fact that his wife lay quietly dying at home—it was a perfectly normal case of tuberculosis of the lungs—would never for a moment have kept back that devoted man of science from watching with interest those beautiful complications of typhoid and diphtheria that were now so strangely prevalent in the back slums of Westbury. He loved a complication, indeed, as a painter loves a sunset, or a mathematician a difficult problem. So Selwyn Utterton was out on his rounds, as usual; and Marion, propped high on her pillows, and gasping for breath with her wasted frame, wondered once or twice to herself whether she would live out the day till he came back again with the brougham to say good-bye to her.

"Nurse," she murmured feebly at last, rousing herself beyond her strength in a final effort, "I can't die till I've written a line that's haunting me. Lift me higher just a minute, please; give me a pencil and paper!"

The nurse looked at her and paused. Well, the patient was too far gone to make remonstrance worth while. When all hope is over, one may at least humor them. So she did as she was bid. Marion Utterton took the pencil in her pallid fingers. She gazed blankly for a minute or two at the smooth white cream-laid

note. Then she roused herself once more, and with feverish energy wrote hard and deep on the paper with all the little force still left in her body.

"An envelope, nurse," she said again, half inarticulately, as she finished the writing; and the nurse handed her one from the drawer in solemn silence.

The poor pale girl—for she was barely twenty-four—directed it in the same spasmodic, deep-digging way, and then passed it across with a long breath to the nurse at the bedside.

"Nurse," she said, solemnly, looking deep into the woman's eyes, "promise me one thing before I die. Keep that note while I live, and give it up to no one; but as soon as I'm dead, put a stamp on it and post it!"

"Yes, dear," the nurse answered low, holding the white hand in hers, and stroking her hair tenderly. "I'll do as you say. Poor child; God bless you!"

There was a minute's pause; then a man's light foot echoed faintly on the stair. A gentle soft foot, as becomes a doctor. The door opened noiselessly, without a motion of the air, and Selwyn Utterton entered. A handsome man, with a beautiful face—cold, clear-cut, intellectual.

He gazed at his wife with a quietly critical stare. "Still at the same stage as when I left?" he said, eyeing her hard with professional calmness. "But you've been exerting yourself too much, I see. Black rings round the eyes. In these final stages exertion exhausts the vascular system. Elasticity fails. Nurse, you shouldn't permit her."

He moved over by the bedside with a soft, velvety tread, and took her hand in his; but it was to feel her pulse. "Too high, too high!" he said, shaking his head and frowning. "She'd better be alone for a while with me. You talk to her, nurse, and disturb her. You may go down for the present."

The nurse rose from her seat, smoothed her decent white apron, and quitted the room with a regretful air, as one who lingers. She hardly liked to leave those two alone together.

As soon as she was gone, Selwyn Utterton yawned, stirred the fire into a blaze with meditative poker, regarded the thermometer with medical care, and then stood with his back to the hearth, and his hands crossed behind him. His wife turned her eyes to him, but said not a word. Selwyn Utterton regarded her with a stony stare, yawned a second time, pursed his lips and his brows, and took up the sheet of white paper that lay upon the table. It was the under sheet of the quire on which Marion had written.

He took it up mechanically and quite at random, but its appearance surprised him.

"Hullo!" he cried, with a start, looking close at the furrows pressed deep into its surface. "Why, how's this, Marion? I say, you've been writing!"

The dying woman's face flushed fiery red, and then, in a moment, grew pale as death. "Give me that paper, Selwyn," she exclaimed, half raising herself on the pillow with a convulsive effort. "Give me that paper! I want it."

"No, I won't," her husband answered, regarding it still harder, in an attentive way. "My need is greater. This is odd—precious odd. I can't quite make it out. But you've been writing, it seems to me . . . to Elsie Maturin."

Marion fell back upon the pillow and gasped. "Oh, Selwyn," she cried, clasping her hands, "I'm dying! I'm dying! Have you no pity? Give it to me!"

The young man made no answer, but strolled over slowly to his medicine chest, and selecting a bottle and a brush with seeming carelessness, smeared something dark in broad washes across the face of the paper. It was iodine liniment. The furrows in the paper caught the coloring matter at once, and he could read the letter at sight almost as easily as if it were written in ink. "This is odd," he repeated. "Very odd. You dug your pencil too deep; the page tells tales. I wonder you could write so, Marion, about your own husband. You're a wonderful thought-reader! How on earth did you know I cared for that girl? 'For your own sake, Miss

Maturin, not for mine, I write from my dying bed to put you on your guard against Selwyn Utterton. He has helped to kill me slowly by long neglect, partly because he's tired of me, but partly also because he wants to marry *you*. Oh, trust me, and refuse him. He never loved *me*—he married me for my money, and then he tried to kill me.' That's not true, you know, Marion, the phthisical tendency's hereditary in your family. 'He loves *you* now, and he'll love you for twelve months, and then he'll tire of you. For heaven's sake, take my advice, and have nothing to do with him!' Well, anyhow, you've put it plain enough, I must say! Has this letter been posted?"

"No," the dying woman answered, with a groan. "But it will be—it will be."

Selwyn Utterton crumpled up the copy carelessly in his hand, and flung it into the fire without the faintest show of ill-temper. "It won't be," he said, slowly. "Nurse has it, I'm sure. And she shan't go out of this house alive till she's given it up to me."

With a sudden burst, his wife sat bolt upright in the bed and glared at him fiercely. "Selwyn Utterton," she cried, in a very terrible voice, "if you dare to do that, my feet will follow you to your grave. They'll dog you day and night. They'll never for one moment leave you or desert you."

She fell back upon the pillow with a fall like lead. Selwyn Utterton stepped across and gazed at her sullenly. Her lips were black; her eyes were vacant. He rang the bell for the nurse. "She's dead," he said, quietly. "She's been over exciting herself again, and *this* is the consequence. Internal hemorrhage, of course —due to your carelessness. Give me that letter she wrote. You've got it in your pocket."

"I won't," the nurse said, trembling, but facing him like a man. "It was her very last wish. You've killed her yourself. But you shan't have her letter."

Selwyn Utterton stared sternly at her for half a minute. He was a very calm man. He never opened his lips, but, taking two steps forward, he caught both the

nurse's hands in one of his own, and twisted them painfully. With his other hand he made a sudden dive into her pocket unawares for the letter. "Oh! I won't, won't I?" he cried, holding it aloft above his head for a second in triumph. "There are two opinions about *that!*" Then he flung it into the fire and watched it burn slowly.

And as he did so, those last words seemed to ring afresh in his ears: "My feet will follow you to your grave. They'll dog you day and night. They'll never for one moment leave you or desert you."

II.

Selwyn Utterton, though calmly callous for a cultivated man, was a profound believer in the supernatural in everyday life. He was a psychical researcher and an esoteric Buddhist; he had volumes of occult science and oriental mysticism; he dabbled in everything with a touch of the ghostly in it. So Marion's last words caused him for the moment some little inconvenience. He could have watched her die, indeed, without a moment's remorse. What was a death to him? He had long been expecting it—nay, more, looking forward to it. But that dying threat stuck in his throat, somehow. It had a tinge of the supernatural. A curse is a curse, whoever pronounces it. Marion alive, he never minded for a moment; but Marion dead—to a man of his temperament, that was a very different matter.

So for the next two nights, in spite of his outer calmness, Selwyn Utterton lay awake many hours on his bed, tortured by strange doubts as to those last words of Marion's. Time and again he dozed off, and woke up with a shudder. Could Marion be standing as she threatened, cold and white, by his bedside? Would her feet really follow him, as she said, to his grave? Her feet—those white feet, those pale thin feet—would they dog him through life? Not yet, not yet; she was unburied still; and psychical researchers say ghosts never walk before the corpse is buried. But afterwards—ah, afterwards, who could tell? who could guess? Inca-

pable as he was of feeling true remorse, Selwyn Utterton, lying thus in suspense in his bed, still shrank with strange terror from that possible future.

But how did Marion ever find out, he wondered, that unspoken admiration of his for Elsie Maturin? Hardly even to himself had he ever confessed it openly—certainly not to Elsie, poor innocent Elsie—far less, then, of all women on earth to Marion. He couldn't make it out. It was a psychical mystery.

On the third night, Selwyn Utterton sat up late by himself in the surgery, over a smouldering fire. He sat up and mused, and skimmed his books of occult philosophy for comfort. Doctors are seldom mystics; but when they take to mysticism, my experience is that they're the most mystical of all men. Selwyn Utterton turned over page after page in deep reverie by himself, till the fire burned low, and the clock on the mantelpiece began to strike the small hours of the morning. About two o'clock the flame flickered blue. And still he sat, and still he pondered. He was afraid to go to bed, that was the fact, in the next room to Marion, while Marion's body yet lay there cold and untended. Not that he feared a corpse; oh, no, but a spirit.

At last he rose with a shudder, and paced the floor, undecided. A terrible idea was seething now in his soul. Marion's feet, she had said, would follow him to the grave! Those small white feet! Those pale thin feet! He hated them. He dreaded them. He would be even with her yet; as he had been even with her over the note for Elsie Maturin.

He moved across to the cabinet in the corner and opened the door of it with some faint hesitation. As he did so, he gazed around him, paused long, and listened. Then he seemed to make his mind up, and selected from his instrument case—a surgical knife and saw. They were clean and shining. He tried the edge with his finger; ay, in excellent condition! For a moment he paused again; then he moved to the door. He opened it softly, and listened once more in the hall. All, all was silent. With a cat-like tread, he began

mounting the stairs, a candle in one hand, and the instruments in the other.

And the clock on the stairs ticked slowly, slowly.

For ten minutes or more he was gone; and the room was silent. At the end of that time, the door opened once more, and Selwyn Utterton stole back again, solemn, grim, and cynical. Under his arm he carried a small white paper parcel. A smile played about the corners of his handsome mouth. A very sinister smile. This time he had outwitted her.

A dead body to a surgeon, you see, is merely a subject. He has cut up a round dozen of them in his time at his hospital.

He stirred up the embers and poked the fire into a blaze. Then he put on fresh coal, heaping it higher and higher. Bit by bit he built up a great bank of fuel, rising high into the chimney, red hot in the centre. Meanwhile, the paper parcel lay unheeded on the rug. He was stoking with all his soul—putting his very heart into it.

By-and-by, he rose again, undid the parcel, placed the contents gingerly on a surgical board, took some phials from the cabinet, and poured two or three liquids, one after another, on the mysterious bundle. Some of them smelt strong, and some hissed faintly. After that, he broke down the bank of red-hot coal, spread it abroad in the grate with the poker, and laid the bundle softly in the midst of the scorching fuel. With a hasty hand, he piled more hot embers on top, and arranged fresh lumps from the scuttle over all in a glowing pyramid. Then he sat in his arm-chair and watched it burn slowly away—watched it burn away, bit by bit, to indistinguishable ashes. It took a long, long time, but he watched it out none the less to the bitter end. The stuff from the bottles made it smell like aromatic essences. Selwyn Utterton never went to bed at all that night. He sat up in his chair by the fire till morning; and when the servants came down at seven o'clock to clean up the room, they found him sitting there still, nodding and dozing dreamily.

III.

THAT day Marion's corpse was safely buried; and Selwyn Utterton breathed again. She could never follow him to his grave now—that lame and halting ghost. She could but hobble round the world; and he was free to make love to Elsie Maturin.

In the evening he sat by the surgery fire once more, a bachelor at large, relieved from all fears of Marion's vengeance.

Just to while away the time, however, he took down from the shelf a medical book, and skimmed it with interest for half an hour, for he loved his profession. But the subject soon flagged, and he passed on to another. His eye fell casually on a spiritualist treatise. It was a wild but learned book by a half-crazy Frenchman. He took it down hap-hazard, and opened it anywhere at random. The page he hit upon contained a vivid account of the change of opinion which came over the ideas of early men with the progress from burying the dead to burning them. Only by burning, the author said, with dogmatic conviction, could the inmost and most genuine ghost of things be finally set free from the material body. Hence the Greeks and Romans not only burnt the corpse itself, to liberate the shade, but they also burnt the clothing, armor, implements, and utensils of the deceased on the funeral pyre, that their souls might accompany him to the other world for his use and benefit. Indeed, it had been noticed, in countries where burning still prevailed, that if any portion of a man's body remained unconsumed by the funeral fire, his ghost was apt to re-appear to survivors lacking a hand, or an arm, as the case might be, and to beg piteously for the liberation of the missing member. Thus, at Masulipatam in 1873—But Selwyn Utterton read no further. Instead of that he flung down the book by his side with a cry of horror. And well he might, indeed—for there, on the hearth before him, a hideous sight stood revealed to him, as clear as daylight.

Two severed feet stood close together on the tiles of the grate, inside the fender, as though they had stepped that minute out of the glowing fire-place, and supported an invisible body above them!

They were just two feet—no more—sawn deftly across by surgical skill through flesh and bone and a little above the ankle. Two small white feet. Two pale thin feet. Distinct and clear, yet transparent and intangible. They stood there and mocked him. It was she who had outwitted him.

Selwyn Utterton sat and gazed at them in horror. As he looked, the feet rose slowly, first one, then the other, and stepped across the fender, and moved toward the other arm-chair by the fire. One of them planted itself firmly on the ground, and the other hung in mid-air inclined at an angle, as if the leg to which it belonged was crossed over its fellow. Some mysterious creature seemed to be seated in the chair unseen; and only the feet appeared to have made themselves definitely visible.

In an agony of alarm, Selwyn Utterton sat there, horror-struck till nearly eleven. He dared not move from the spot. He dared not speak or cry. Those spectral feet kept him riveted to his place. He never stirred in his chair. He just sat and gazed blankly at them.

But the feet sat on, and took no notice of him in any way. Now and again, they uncrossed themselves, or changed their position for greater ease or comfort. But for the most part they simply sat, and glowed and glared at him, as it were, from their raw-cut edges.

It was a ghastly sight. Born surgeon as he was, Selwyn Utterton recoiled from it.

At eleven o'clock he could stand it no longer. He rose, and moved in a maze to the door. The feet rose at the same moment, and stepped across the room, foot by foot beside him. He turned out the gas and made hastily for the passage. If possible, he would dodge them and shut them in behind him. But the feet were too quick for him—those slender, agile feet. They

glided out as he passed, and waited in the hall to see where he was next going. He turned to the stairs. The feet tramped after him, one step at a time, following close at his heels—just as Marion had promised. He bolted into his bedroom. The feet rushed in behind him. He flung himself on the bed, clothes and all, and covered his face in wild awe with the sheet and counterpane. But he couldn't rest so. After a few brief minutes of this unmanly panic, he opened his eyes and looked again. The feet sat patiently on the floor by a chair at the bedside. They would sit there all night, he felt certain in his own soul. He had wrought this evil himself. It was absolutely useless trying to avoid them.

Selwyn Utterton was no coward, in spite of his love for occult science. He braced himself up, and regarded them fixedly. This was a matter to be faced. If the things meant to stop there, he might as well, first as last, get accustomed to facing them. He rose with his eyes still firmly fixed on those ghastly phantoms, and undressed slowly. And still they haunted him. He turned out the gas and stepped into bed. For a minute or two he kept his eyes tight shut as before. Then curiosity overcame him. He opened them once more. The room was dark, but through the slit in the blind a little moonlight penetrated into it. By that uncertain gloom, he could see them still, sitting patiently by the bedside, in the attitude of one who was watching him closely. Marion had been as good as her word, he felt sure. She was dogging him now, and she would always dog him.

IV.

After a night spent half in sleep, half in gazing between whiles at those pallid uncomplaining feet, Utterton rose and dressed himself and went down to breakfast. The feet followed him down stairs—pitter-patter, pitter-patter—with a ghostly tread, but he alone seemed to hear them or see them, or notice them in any way. While he breakfasted, they sat at the easy-chair by the

fire, warming themselves alternately, with outstretched soles held up to the grate, for it was a very cold morning. When he finished, they rose and shifted all noiselessly to the opposite chair. He took the paper in his hand, and pretended to read; but out of the corners of his eyes, he felt sure all the time the feet were still keeping close watch from their place upon him.

He ordered the brougham, and went out upon his rounds. The feet followed him to the door and out into the street. It was a muddy morning and Selwyn Utterton, looking close at the pavement, saw at once for himself that the feet, as they passed, left no mark upon the gray slush that flooded the flagstones.

He stepped into the carriage; the feet mounted behind him, one after another on the step of the brougham; muddy as it was, they remained pure and white and deadly pale as ever. No taint of this earth, Utterton thought to himself, could ever soil them again. They had been purified as by fire, and would remain so forever.

All that day, as he went on his rounds, the feet, unabashed, still followed him everywhere. As he stopped at each house, they got down from the brougham, with slow deliberateness, and stood waiting at the door while he knocked, and trooped after him up the stairs, and sat expectant by a chair at the patient's bedside. From house to house, they took to the brougham again, and settled themselves down as if they belonged to a person sitting on the opposite seat, with her back to the horses. But all the time, they remained cold and white and rigid as ever; a pair of tender, naked, bloodless little feet, corpse-like in their pallor, and cut visibly off just above the ankle.

V.

Day by day, this went on, and Selwyn Utterton at last grew almost accustomed to it. Hard, stern man that he was, he persisted in his own way; he wouldn't allow those spectral feet to turn him for one moment from his fixed purpose. Months rolled by, and the pe-

riod of decent mourning began to go past, and Utterton paid his court, notwithstanding the feet, to Elsie Maturin. Not the sort of person at all, you would say, to take the doctor's fancy; but that only shows you are a bad psychologist. She was a tender, beautiful, simple-hearted girl, little Elsie, who had known hardly anything of Mrs. Utterton while she lived, and who was as innocent of all blame as Marion herself could have been. She never even thought of Selwyn Utterton till months after Marion's death, and then at first only in a vague, half-frightened sort of way—surprised that anybody who was so clever as people said the doctor was, should ever see anything in *her* to make love to. But after the fashion of all simple, trustful natures, poor Elsie soon learnt to love the man who loved her; and Selwyn Utterton, for his part, loved her well in return; for the moment at least, he loved her profoundly, devotedly. For there, again, you show yourself a bad psychologist. It's a great mistake to suppose a bad man can't truly and whole-souledly love a good woman. On the contrary, her very possession of the sweet qualities he lacks himself makes the good woman impress him still more deeply and earnestly. As Marion had said, he would no doubt grow tired in the long run of Elsie; but in the first fair flush of a pure love, at least, she was inexpressibly dear to him.

And yet, for very love of her, the man shrank with a great shrinking from asking her to marry him. Cold and stern as he was, he respected her purity and her innocence too much almost to thrust himself upon her. He hesitated far more than many a simpler and better man would have hesitated in his place. He was devoured with love for her; yet he knew in his own heart he was wholly unworthy of her.

One summer evening, however, by chance, he met Elsie on the path across the fields, after his work was done, and walked home by her side, thrilling inwardly with pleasure. Elsie walked beside him, all tremulous, much wondering what he could mean. She knew he loved her; she knew he wished to marry her; what on

earth then made him hesitate, when he must see she loved him?

At last, by the little foot-bridge over the stream, Utterton paused for a moment, and plucked up heart of grace, without one word of warning, to take her small hand in his, and say, abruptly, with the directness of simple heart-felt passion, "Oh, Elsie, why should we two fence and parry any longer? I love you! You love me! My Elsie, will you marry me?"

And Elsie, holding his hand all trembling in hers, answered in quivering accents, with a rose-red face, "Mr. Utterton, you know I love you well. You know my answer. What need for me to tell you?"

In a tumult of delight, Selwyn Utterton stooped down and kissed her dainty small hand with eager haste. They two were quite alone. He glanced up and down the path. There was nobody near. Her blush was so tempting. Her lips were so red. Dare he, oh, dare he? "Just this once, Elsie," he murmured, "to seal our compact!"

And as he bent his head to kiss her, he saw close by upon the ground—two pale white feet, standing tip-toe, all intent, as of one who listened and strained every nerve to hear what they two were saying together.

VI.

Day by day, and hour by hour, through that ill-omened courtship, those two white feet still pursued Selwyn Utterton relentlessly, remorselessly. Time after time he sat with Elsie alone in the dusk of blind man's holiday, holding her wee hand like a lover in his, and whispering in her ear those fervent nothings that all lovers on earth for a thousand centuries have whispered in vain—and all the while that pair of silent ghostly watchers stood by or leaned forward, and checked every word he spoke with sardonic approval. Sometimes they took up the attitude of one who laughs a bitter laugh; sometimes of one who smiles cynical incredulity; sometimes of one who looks on at a poor girl's ruin with pitying sympathy. When they turned towards Utterton, they turned with

defiant boldness; when they turned towards Elsie, they turned with infinite sadness and commiseration. Never for one moment did they leave him alone with his love in quiet. At every turn, as Marion had promised, they dogged him and outwitted him.

But Selwyn Utterton was made of sterner stuff than could be turned away from his purpose by any ghostly phantom. Feet or no feet, he meant to marry Elsie. Let them dog him to his grave, he said to himself more than once, he would go on, none the less, as though he never perceived them.

So at last the day of his wedding was fixed, and Elsie's dress was made, and the guests were bidden, and all arrangements were complete, and Westbury was agog with expectation of a rare event in its peaceful monotony.

That evening Selwyn Utterton sat up late by the fire-side. He sat quite alone. Strange to say, for once, the feet had deserted him.

He sat and told himself day-dreams like any other lover.

About twelve o'clock he went up to his bed-room and turned on the gas and began to undress himself. A new frock coat had come home for him to be married in—a wedding garment of the most correct description. The housemaid, not to crumple it, had laid it out upon the bed. Selwyn Utterton glanced at it, and was just going to hang it up on a peg behind the door. As he did so a terrible sight met his eyes indeed. For the first time in their acquaintance the feet had turned aggressive.

They were seated firmly—nay, doggedly, resolutely—on the coat, so that he couldn't remove it without touching and displacing them. But they wouldn't be dispossessed. He saw in a moment from the doggedness of their attitude what the feet were driving at. Somebody had planted herself all unseen on the bed, with her arms clasped round her knees, and her teeth clenched, though, as usual, nothing but the feet was visible. He dared not disturb them; he was cowed

and terrified. Those feet meant mischief. They never would budge from the post they had taken.

Slowly and mechanically he drew up a chair and sat opposite the feet, still staring at them blankly. The feet stood still, and stared back at him in defiance. His blood ran cold. He stared, and stared, and stared, and shivered. Vague terrors filled his soul. This was Nemesis, Nemesis! He never could venture to wear that coat. He never could creep into that cold bed again. He must sit up all night; and it was chilly weather.

With his eyes still riveted on the feet, he sat there motionless. One o'clock struck, then two o'clock, three o'clock. About half-past three the feet grew slowly dim. He was conscious of a cold thrill that ran faint down his spine; he was conscious of a nameless implacable terror. His eyes started from his head; his brain swam vaguely.

The feet and the world seemed to fade before him.

Next morning, when the servants knocked at the door, they received no answer. The housemaid turned the handle, and gave a loud scream of alarm. Selwyn Utterton sat bolt upright in a chair by the bed-side, gazing with fixed eyes at a point in the wedding coat, and as still as marble. He was stark and stiff. The rival doctor believed he had died some hours ago.

Always a dabbler in the occult, the evidence before the coroner's inquest said. And he died of terror. His head was all full of strange ideas and beliefs. He had seen a ghost, folks guessed. But, anyhow, it was certainly fear that killed him.

And the doctor who conducted the post-mortem observed, with interest, that two diseased spots were noticeable on either retina, spots with such a distribution that they must certainly have shifted from point to point as he altered the focus of his eyes, and would no doubt produce during life the distinct illusion of some vague white body or bodies in the foreground, perhaps with a faint halo or rose-pink extension.